

**“Come over and help us”: White Women, Reform and
the Missionary Endeavour in India 1876 – 1920**

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Abstract

The end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries was a period of reform in English speaking countries. This thesis examines the way in which New Zealand women missionaries to India between 1875 and 1920 embodied in their missionary activities the ideologies of reform.

A number of themes will be considered in this thesis. The first, is that the New Zealand women who undertook missionary work in India were part of the trend towards the feminisation of the foreign missionary movement, and as such, were sites of feminist reform. These women were mostly formally educated and trained, and their mission work in India was largely a continuation of careers as single independent women which provided them with opportunities for travel and adventure not open to other single women in New Zealand. This challenging of traditional gender boundaries was made more respectable because it was undertaken in a religious sphere and justified by more traditional ideas of femininity and evangelical beliefs. These women also developed identities as reformers, and were influenced by feminist, imperial and evangelical ideas about reform. A second major theme is the way in which missionary women's representations of India in missionary literature were influenced by these ideologies of reform. This will be examined by looking at how the New Zealand missionary women negotiated and articulated Indian landscapes, spaces, dress and bodies through the rhetoric of rescuing, cleanliness and femininity, which was in turn influenced by the feminist, imperial and evangelical strands of reform.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| APC | Australian Presbyterian Church |
| ANZCO | Archives New Zealand, Christchurch Office |
| ANZDO | Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Office |
| ATL | Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington |
| BMS | The Baptist Missionary Society |
| CBC | New Zealand Baptist Historical Society Archives at Ayson Clifford Library, Carey Baptist College |
| CEZMS | The Church of England Zenana Missionary Society |
| EBD | Emma Beckingsale Diaries |
| ECS | Established Church of Scotland |
| FMC | The Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand |
| HL | The Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hakena at University of Otago, Te Whare Wananga o Otago |
| HW | Hewitson Library at Knox Theological College |
| MBL | Macmillian Brown Library at University of Canterbury |
| MM | The Mukti Mission |
| MR | McNab New Zealand Room at Dunedin Public Libraries |
| NCW | The National Council of Women |
| NE | Papers held by Neville Emslie, Knox College |
| NZBMS | The New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society |
| NZJH | <i>New Zealand Journal of History</i> |
| NZPC | The New Zealand Presbyterian Church |
| NZWCTU | The New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union |
| PCANZ | Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives |
| PGA | <i>Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand</i> |
| P&IVM | The Poona and Indian Village Mission |
| PWMU | The Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union |
| PWTI | Presbyterian Women's Training Institute |
| RPP | Private Papers of The Rev. D. M. Riddle |
| SMS | The Scottish Missionary Society |
| SPT | The 1893 Suffrage Petition Transcript held at National Archives, Dunedin and Christchurch Offices |
| UFCS | The United Free Church of Scotland |
| WMS | The Women's Missionary Society |
| YWBCU | The Young Women's Bible Class Union |
| ZBMM | The Zenana Bible and Medical Mission |

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Author's Note

All Indian terms and place names have been left as they appear in the original sources to avoid potential confusion. Similarly the New Zealand missionary women have been addressed according to the information and spellings within the source material. Christian names have been used where they are known, otherwise the women are addressed by the title 'Miss'.

Journal references have not been standardised, also appearing as they are in the sources, as journals sometimes altered their referencing and numbering over time.

INTRODUCTION

Edinburgh in 1910 hosted the World Missionary Conference. With its representatives from missionary societies from Britain, America, Europe and the British settler colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the Conference represented the international missionary endeavour, which sought to “Carry the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World”.¹ Statistics gathered for the conference revealed that close to a third of missionaries working in India were single women.² New Zealand’s women missionaries to India were part of this international women’s missionary network, and while they represented only a small proportion of those single women missionaries, this thesis aims to recover their part in this feminisation of foreign mission in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Thirty-four New Zealand women went to India as single women missionaries in the forty-four years between 1876, when Miss Thorn left for India to work in Banares with the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission,³ and 1920. As well as representing the first generation of single missionary women, the time period corresponds with what Eric Hobsbawn has termed the “Age of Empire”,⁴ the height of the British Colonial Raj in India. While “men were carving up the tropical world”, middle class women were

¹ Sub-Committees of Commission I, (eds.), *Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions – Containing a Directory of Missionary Societies, A Classified Summary of Statistics, An Index of Mission Stations, and a Series of Specially Prepared Maps of Mission Fields*, (Edinburgh, World Missionary Conference, 1910), frontispiece.

² Ibid., p.69

³ J.C. Pollock, *Shadows Fall Apart – The Story of the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), p.47

⁴ M.T.Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus, (eds.), *Gendered Missions – Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.8

moving beyond their homes to engage in teaching, nursing, philanthropy and missionary work.⁵ One of the themes of this thesis is the intersection between feminist reforms of the period, of which the feminisation of mission is part, and the impact of imperialism in the forging of colonial identities. This thesis aims to show that the missionary endeavour in India was not a simple linear colonial relationship between Britain and India. Instead, the missionary endeavour in India was a series of interactions between a wider western European culture and that of a perceived Indian one.

The missionary endeavour of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought missionaries into contact with Indian communities. Both the British and Indian communities' expectations of the 'other', influenced the ways in which these communities understood and retold the experiences of cultural contact. This thesis is positioned in two colonial settings, New Zealand and India. It explores how the experiences and work of the missionary women from New Zealand who worked in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were influenced by their backgrounds and experiences at home in New Zealand. Feminist historians have recovered the lives and experiences of British and American missionary women working in India. This thesis however aims to recover the history of New Zealand missionary women who were part of the feminisation of the New Zealand missionary endeavour and position them within the context of the international trend towards the feminisation of mission.

The thirty-four single New Zealand missionary women, who went to India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, share similarities as well as differences. The

⁵ Huber and Lutkehaus, p.8

New Zealand missionary women worked for eight different missionary societies. The largest number, thirteen, worked for the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society (NZBMS). The New Zealand Presbyterian Church (NZPC) was the other significant contributor of single missionary women to India from New Zealand, however, until it established its own mission station in Ludhiana, in the Punjab in 1909, women were sent out in association with the Free Church of Scotland. Interdenominational missionary societies such as the London Missionary Society (LMS) or the Poona and Indian Village Mission (P&IVM) also took on single New Zealand women as missionaries in India. New Zealand missionary women worked in many different places throughout India. Some women worked in major cities such as Madras (Chennai) while others worked in small villages such as the Baptist mission station at Furreedpore in East Bengal. Many women moved between mission stations and even mission societies, at sometime during their stay in India.

While the New Zealand women worked in different parts of India and for different missionary societies, their reactions to India were remarkably similar. This thesis focuses on these similarities. Investigating influences and backgrounds shared by the missionary women provide an insight into the reasons why missionary women produced similar responses to the experience of working in such a diverse country as India. By highlighting similarities across denominational boundaries, we can investigate the broader picture of women's religious experience in New Zealand around the turn of the twentieth century.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Missionary women have, for a long time, been absent from the histories of mission. More recently however, feminist historians, in re-evaluating the links between imperialism and feminism, have rediscovered the lives of missionary women. This rediscovery has largely focused on British women, and New Zealand missionary women have remained largely absent from the general histories of both New Zealand and colonial India. This thesis bridges the gap between two areas of historiography, New Zealand women's history and the history of women in imperialism which utilises feminist theory on gender and race.

There has been little intersection between religion and women's history in New Zealand. Peter Lineham in an historiographical survey noted that "there has been little academic writing on religious history" in New Zealand and that religious history has tended to be left out of scholarship on New Zealand social history.⁶ Within this limited field of New Zealand religious history, women's religious history has received even less attention.

New Zealand missionary women are often not remembered in the general histories of New Zealand,⁷ rather they have remained remembered and celebrated within the church and religious circles.⁸ Thus most of the biographies and histories of women missionaries have been written from within the religious sphere. While they provide important biographical information and highlight the lives of women who would otherwise go

⁶ P. Lineham, "Religion" in P. Lineham and C. Davis (eds.), *The Future of the Past – Themes in New Zealand History*, (Palmerston North, Massey University, 1991), p.4

⁷ *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Three, 1901 – 1920*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press and Bridget Williams Books, Department of Internal Affairs, 1996)

unnoticed, they are often celebratory in tone and provide a narrative of the missionaries' experiences, often with little critical analysis of the viewpoints and understandings of indigenous cultures that the missionary women held.⁹ Single missionary women were clearly visible in the New Zealand churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and played an important role in the interactions between New Zealand and foreign countries. It is important therefore to rediscover these women and analyse their historical contributions. This thesis aims to complete the picture of these missionary women's lives by investigating their motivations and justifications for missionary work.

While histories of particular women's organisations, such as the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) and the Mothers' Union, have been produced often for centennial celebrations,¹⁰ women and religion has received little scholarly attention.

More recently Anne Else's edited book on New Zealand women's organisations *Women Together – A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand Nga Ropu Wahine o te Motu*, has gone some way to expanding our knowledge of women's religious activity in New Zealand by acknowledging the importance of religion for women in New Zealand as

⁸ B. Whitelaw, *A Message from the Missahibs: New Zealand Presbyterian Women Missionaries in the Punjab, 1910–1940*, (MA (Hist), University of Otago, 2001), p.2

⁹ S. Hungerford, *Marching with Joy – The story of Joy Crombie's 45 years serving with SIM in Ethiopia and Liberia*, (Auckland, SIM New Zealand, 1998); author unknown, *Five Women in Mission – Studies from the New Zealand Anglican Board of Missions*, ([Wellington], The Board of Anglican Missions, [199-])

¹⁰ B. Archer, T. Holland and N. A. Robertshaw, *A History of the Mother's Union and the Association of Anglican Women in New Zealand*, (The Association of Anglican Women in New Zealand, 1983); B. M. Lowe and R. I. Williamson, *A Silver Jubilee History of C.W.A. (Christian Women's Auxiliary) Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand, 1921 – 1946*, (Wellington, G. Deslandes, 1946); V. L. McLennan, *These Seventy five years: A Short History of the New Zealand Baptist Women's Missionary Union*, (Palmerston North, New Zealand Baptist Women's Missionary Union, 1978); Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, *Women's Work for Mission: The Story of the Beginnings and Growth of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of New Zealand 1905 – 1939*, (Christchurch, Presbyterian Bookroom, 1939).

a sphere for social organisation and participation, especially in relation to charity.¹¹ Ruth Fry's *Out of the Silence* provides a sound history of women within the Methodist church and a good framework for further studies.¹² By providing the narrative histories of women's religious organisations both these books are important in identifying and recapturing women's participation in religious organisations and incorporating them into the mainstream histories of New Zealand. Many more studies are required to expand our basic understanding of women's religious activity in New Zealand across all historical periods and all denominations.

Recently, there has also been some recognition of the important part religion played in some of the significant milestones in women's history, such as the suffrage campaign. Scholars such as Jolene McKay and Jane Simpson have investigated the importance of Christianity to the women of the New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union (NZWCTU) who were instrumental in campaigning for women's right to vote.¹³ Margaret Tennant's studies of New Zealand deaconesses has also placed women's religious history into the wider context of New Zealand social work and welfare history. This thesis expands on these works by placing New Zealand women missionaries and their work, not only into the context of religious history, but within the wider social and cultural patterns, of women's historical experiences.

¹¹ A. Else, (ed.), *Women Together – A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand – Nga Ropu Wahine o te Motu*, (Wellington, Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs/Daphne Brasell Associates, 1993)

¹² R. Fry, *Out of the Silence: Methodist Women of Aotearoa, 1822-1985*, (Christchurch, Methodist Publishing, 1987)

¹³ J. McKay, "'The Tie that Binds': Christianity in the New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885 – 1900", (BAHons (Hist), University of Otago, 1995), p.ii and J. Simpson, unpublished article

Several recent studies have highlighted the feminisation of mission work within the New Zealand context, illustrating the way in which mission and deaconess work provided “a niche within certain churches for women otherwise excluded from a leadership role.”¹⁴ Rachel Gillet’s dissertation, *Helpmeets and Handmaidens: The Role of Women in Mission Discourse*, helps to expand the story of women and mission in New Zealand history. Gillet explains that New Zealand changed from being a site for receiving missionaries to one of sending missionaries. Gillet sees this shift as an expansion of the limited role of missionary wives to a more active role for women in mission work as single independent women missionaries.¹⁵ In discussing single missionary women in China, Gillet importantly places gender into the missionary history of New Zealand and critically evaluates the missionary discourses of the times.

Brooke Whitelaw’s thesis also aims to place missionary women into New Zealand women’s history by investigating the missionary selection process and the impact of gender ideals upon this process. Whitelaw argues that missionary work gave single women the opportunity for a career with “purpose, respect and a sense of personal power”.¹⁶ Whitelaw’s group biography focuses on the experiences and impact of foreign missionary work on New Zealand Presbyterian women in the Punjab from 1910 to 1940 within a women’s history perspective.¹⁷

¹⁴ M. Tennant, “Sisterly Ministrations. The Social Work of Protestant Deaconesses in New Zealand 1890 – 1940”, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 32 (1), April 1998, p.7

¹⁵ R. Gillet, *Helpmeets and Handmaidens: The Role of Women in Mission Discourse*, (BAHons (Hist), University of Otago, 1998), p.1

¹⁶ Whitelaw, p.1

¹⁷ Ibid, p.3

Tennant has written about the New Zealand deaconesses and places their work both within the wider context of New Zealand church history and the international movement of deaconesses in Britain and Australia.¹⁸ Tennant has highlighted how the deaconess movement, like the women's foreign missionary movement, emphasised 'women's work for women',¹⁹ and advocated a particular model of Christian womanhood.²⁰ Tennant has also incorporated international feminist historical perspectives into the history of women and religion in New Zealand. In her work on the interaction between Pakeha Deaconesses and Maori women she has utilised the concepts of gender and race in order to argue that deaconesses were cultural intermediaries, promoting Pakeha concepts of femininity and civilisation.²¹

This thesis elaborates on this identification of the feminisation of missionary work within the New Zealand context and attempts to place this process within the wider international context. Like Tennant, I have incorporated the feminist approach of using race and gender to unpack the cultural encounters between the missionary women and the communities in which they worked.

Traditionally imperial history referred to the narratives of colonial government and empire. These histories were drawn from the dominant discourses of the colonial regimes, advocating one history of empire centred on the exploits of great white men and was often progressive in tone. These histories did not see the multiple dimensions of the

¹⁸ M. Tennant, 1998, pp.8-9

¹⁹ Ibid, p.13

²⁰ Ibid, p.9

imperial experience, both for the colonisers and the colonised. However, due to critiques from subaltern studies and post colonialism of this form of history of empire, imperial history now focuses on investigating interactions and relationships and power relations between subgroups within the imperial framework. Most recently feminist critiques have introduced the analytical concept of gender relations into the study of the imperial experience. Imperial women's history has identified and rediscovered women as actors (or actresses) complicit in the imperial project. It sees Western women as acted upon, and acting within imperial regimes. It has also looked at the impact of imperialism on indigenous women. It is within this feminist scholarship of empire and the imperial relationship that I wish to situate my thesis.

There are an increasing number of historians who have focused on the importance of, or have been reviewing the role of missionaries in imperial histories. In particular there has been a focus on reclaiming the story of women in the missionary histories. Patricia Grimshaw opened this field of study with her article in 1985 on American Missionary wives in Hawaii.²² These studies research the feminisation of the missionary field and the gender relations within the missionary societies at home and in the field, in different denominations in Britain,²³ America²⁴ and Canada.²⁵ Judith Rowbotham in her article

²¹ M. Tennant, "Pakeha Deaconesses and the New Zealand Methodist Mission to Maori, 1893-1940", *The Journal of Religious History*, 23 (3), October 1999, pp. 309-326

²² P. Grimshaw, "New England Missionary Wives, Hawaiian Women and the 'Cult of True Womanhood'", *Hawaiian Journal of History*, 19, 1985, pp.71-100

²³ J.A. Morawiecki, "The Peculiar Mission of Christian Womanhood" *The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society 1880 – 1920*, (PhD (Phil), University of Sussex, 1998). R. Seton, "Open doors for the female labourers: Women Candidates of the London Missionary Society 1875-1914", Robert A. Bichers and Rosemary Seton (eds.) *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues*, (Richmond, Curzon Press, 1996). S. Thorne, "Missionary-Imperial Feminism", Huber and Lutkehaus, pp.39-66

“‘Soldiers of Christ’? Images of Female Missionaries in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain: Issues of Heroism and Martyrdom”,²⁶ has described how these different gender relations were portrayed in missionary literature through stereotypes and images of heroes, heroines and martyrs in nineteenth century Britain.

While there have been some good collective and edited works in this area,²⁷ most studies stay within national and denominational boundaries and therefore do not look at the feminisation of mission as a wider phenomenon and the similarities and differences in gender trends across the field. Comparative studies of the missionary movement would provide valuable insights into general trends and patterns, and much work remains to be done in this area.

The feminist reviews of imperial history have allowed women to be seen as active agents in empire and many historians have outlined Western women’s complicity with the imperial project.²⁸ Catherine Hall argues that empire was situated ‘at home’, in the minds and actions of ordinary British citizens, as well as ‘out there’ on the peripheries of the

²⁴S. Immanuel-David, “A Mission of Gentility: The role of women missionaries in the American Arcot mission, 1839-1938”, *Indian Church History Review*, 20 (2), 1986, pp.143-152. P. R. Hill, *The World their Household: the American Women’s Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, c.1985)

²⁵R. R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992)

²⁶J. Rowbotham, “‘Soldiers of Christ’? Images of Female Missionaries in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain: Issues of Heroism and Martyrdom”, *Gender and History*, 12 (1), April 2000, pp.82-106

²⁷Huber and Lutkehaus. L.A. Flemming, (ed.) *Women’s Work for Women – Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, (San Francisco, Westview Press, 1989). F.Bowie, D. Kirkwood and S. Arderer (eds.) *Women and Missions: Past and Present Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, (Oxford, Berg Publications, 1993)

²⁸A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York, Routledge, 1995)

geographical empire.²⁹ Reina Lewis describes how this idea of 'empire at home' can be seen in the representation of empire by imperial women writers and artists, who represented and constructed ideas of the Orient in their work.³⁰ It is important also to remember the agency of colonised women in the imperial experience and their active role in the negotiation and redefinition of power relations within colonised societies.³¹ Helen McCulloch also sees indigenous women as active agents in empire and examines how Indian women were important in shaping the process of conversion and reaction to Christianity in India.³²

One of the themes that has come out of recent scholarship is the importance of ideas of domesticity and femininity in the cultural contact between missionaries and indigenous women. The importance of the "cult of domesticity" in the imperial enterprise is outlined by Anne McClintock in her book *Imperial Leather*³³ and Patricia Grimshaw has investigated the attempts by American women missionaries to instruct and restructure Hawaiian ideas of femininity and domesticity to fit Western and in particular American models.³⁴ These arguments show the way in which white women acted as a reforming group in the colonial setting and sought to bring about change in gender relationships.³⁵ Karyn Huenemann argues that Western women missionaries were interested in Indian

²⁹ C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992)

³⁰ R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1996)

³¹ McClintock, p.6

³² H. McCulloch, "Sex, Gender and Christian Conversion in Nineteenth-century South India", L.Olson, *Religious Change, Conversion and Culture*, (Sydney, Sydney Studies, 1996)

³³ McClintock

³⁴ Grimshaw, 1985

³⁵ A. Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2001)

women's lives because of their own social feminist agendas of reform and that they "appropriated the voices of Indian women to articulate their own social messages".³⁶

Kumani Jayawardena states that the missionary women believed in their "Christian Burden", their duty to "civilise and christianise and modernise".³⁷ It was the aim of missionary women in India to remake Indian women as 'good wives and mothers' modelled on the ideals of Western concepts of femininity, domesticity and motherhood.³⁸

In this thesis I will attempt to show how New Zealand missionary women fitted into this trend and tried to export and impose their ideas of femininity and domesticity on Indian women.

Imperial women's history has developed as a critique of earlier Western feminist scholarship by highlighting the intersection of the concepts of gender and race and imperialism, and stressing the historically constructed nature of these concepts, which therefore makes them flexible and open to change.³⁹ Anne McClintock points out that these concepts exist in "intimate, reciprocal and contradictory relations" and "come into existence *in and through* relation to each other".⁴⁰ This area of scholarship has shown the importance of moving away from the simple oppositions of gender and race and instead investigating the "interrelations between gender constructions and imperial colonial

³⁶ K. Huenemann, "Flora Annie Steel: A Voice for Indian Women?", B. Mandakranta, (ed.), *Faces of the Feminine – Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.234-250

³⁷ K. Jayawardena, *The White Women's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia during British Rule*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1995)

³⁸ J. Haggis, "Ironies of Emancipation: Changing Configurations of 'Women's Work' in the 'Mission of Sisterhood' to Indian Women", *Feminist Review*, (65), Summer 2000, pp.108-126. J. Rowbotham, "'Hear an Indian Sister's Plea': Reporting on the Work of 19th-Century British Female Missionaries", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 21 (3), 1998, pp.247-261. R. Mohanram, *Black Body: Women, Colonialism, and Space*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

³⁹ McClintock. Lewis. Perry. Hall. Mohanram. Rowbotham. N. Chaudhuri, and M. Strobel, (eds.) *Western Women and Imperialism – Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992)

constructions of race and ethnicity".⁴¹ Radhika Mohanram has looked at how these ideas and concepts were represented in the constructions of landscapes and bodies.⁴² I wish to build on this literature and investigate the way in which gender and race relationships developed in the cultural interactions between New Zealand missionary women and Indian women. This thesis analyses the way in which concepts of gender and race impacted on the constructions of identities. The construction of these identities was a process of dialogue, a dynamic two way process which involved both the missionary women and the Indian communities.⁴³ In developing the ideas of Adele Perry, this thesis highlights the concept of whiteness as an important part of identity for women missionaries as imperial actors.⁴⁴

Maina Chawla Singh in her book *Gender, Religion and "Heathen Lands"*, uses feminist theories to investigate the cultural contact relationships between American missionary women and Indian women. While she recovers women's roles in the culture contact she complicates the picture with the analytical concepts of gender, sexuality, race, culture and power.⁴⁵ She argues that missionary women established a role for themselves as 'rescuer', portraying and constructing Indian women as downtrodden, heathen women to justify their work.⁴⁶ Chapter four of this thesis examines the way in which the image of

⁴⁰ McClintock, p.5

⁴¹ P. Tinkler, "Introduction to Special Issue: Women, Imperialism and Identity", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 21 (3), 1990, abstract

⁴² Mohanram

⁴³ Tinkler, p.218

⁴⁴ Perry, p.5

⁴⁵ M. C. Singh, *Gender, Religion and "Heathen Lands": American Missionary Women in South Asia (1860s-1940s)*, (New York, Garland, 2000) p.89

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.10

the missionary woman as rescuer of the degraded Indian woman was also predominant in New Zealand's missionary literature.

This thesis has also built on broader ideas from wider scholarly fields. Mary Louise Pratt's⁴⁷ literary criticism of the writings by imperial women travellers has provided a valuable model for the concept of culture contact, and Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose's feminist geography is an invaluable source of inspiration and methodology for investigating cultural contact through landscape and space.⁴⁸

DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

Missionary literature and archives have supplied the core source material for this thesis. Writing was an important and necessary part of missionary culture. Colonial officials needed to gather information in order to collect taxes and maintain social order.⁴⁹ Similarly, missionaries required information in order to undertake their evangelising project. Such an ambitious project as the conversion of the whole of India needed revenue as well as support and information to undertake the logistics of the enterprise. In order to garner support and funds from the home populations the home societies needed to be kept supplied with information on India and the mission projects underway there. Knowledge about the religion and culture which the missionaries wished to reform was vital. Missionary writings and the development of a general international missionary

⁴⁷ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (London, Routledge, 1992)

⁴⁸ A. Blunt, and G. Rose, (eds.) *Writing Women and Space – Colonial and Post-Colonial Geographies*, (New York, The Guilford Press, 1994)

⁴⁹ B. S. Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia," B. S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987), p.231

discourse also enabled communication between missionaries both at home and in the field. The missionary women, due to their proximity to domestic Indian life were uniquely placed to contribute to a wider imperial discourse on India; a picture of India that was constructed by colonial officials, travellers, traders and missionaries. The way in which the New Zealand missionary women drew from, and added to, both the imperial and international missionary discourses will be discussed in the second part of this thesis.

Most of the missionary source material for this thesis is held in the New Zealand Baptist Historical Society Archives at Carey Baptist College in Auckland and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives at Knox College in Dunedin. The Baptist and Presbyterian churches were the two major churches in New Zealand to send women to India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Missionary source material consists of both published and unpublished sources. Published sources include missionary journals, pamphlets, books and published reports, while unpublished sources are principally correspondence and diaries.

Published Sources

Missionary journals are the most prominent and prolific published missionary source. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries journals were the principal form of communication between the missionary women and missionary supporters at home in New Zealand. *The PWMU Harvest Field* and *The Missionary Messenger*, published by the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) and the New Zealand Baptist Church respectively, were dedicated solely to the reporting of missionary news. Other

church journals, such as the *Christian Observer* and the *New Zealand Baptist* also carried articles written by missionaries or on mission related topics. Missionary journals also provided the principle means by which New Zealand participated in the international production and distribution of missionary discourse. New Zealand missionary and church journals ran articles and news copied from overseas missionary publications. The New Zealand publication *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* ran extracts from *The Chronicle* of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMUV) of Victoria, featuring news of their counterparts in Australia.⁵⁰ In addition New Zealand missionary journals carried both formal articles written by the missionary women working in India and copies or extracts of their open letters. News of missionary women: their arrival in India, movements around India, their planned furlough itineraries and the missionary women's health was all reported in the journals.

As with other literature of this kind, it is difficult to assess the impact and influence of these journals among the missionary supporters in New Zealand. However circulation figures in the PWMU Annual Reports hint at *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* increasing in popularity. From a circulation of just over five hundred copies in 1906, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field's* circulation in 1915 had reached four thousand five hundred.⁵¹ The extent of the influence of this publication was not expected to end with the women of the PWMU. It was their responsibility to pass on the journal, or copies of the information in

⁵⁰ Extract from *The Chronicle*, "A visit to the Annual Conference of the Women's Association of the United Free Church of Scotland", *The P.W. M. U. Harvest Field*, (13), October 1908, p.iii ; *The P.W. M. U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910

⁵¹ PWMU Annual Report, 1906, p.30 and PWMU Annual Report, 1915 – 1916, p.7, quoted in Whitelaw, p.19

it, to others and try to encourage and promote wider support of the missionary cause.⁵²

Allan Davidson argues that missionary literature, especially missionary periodicals, had an immense influence on the attitudes of their readers. Davidson argues that for many people in New Zealand the “missionary media” was their only access to information about other cultures and religious systems. This information was presented to missionary supporters in New Zealand in the context of their “Christian duty” towards the ‘heathen’,⁵³ which therefore provided a link between the audience and the country they were reading about as well as a focus for their interest.

Along with the information provided in journals it is important in understanding the missionary experience to be aware of the silences in the literature as well. Much of missionary literature was produced under conditions of self-censorship. The missionary women self edited their work, writing only about events and issues considered of interest to their home audience. It is also likely that the journal editors in New Zealand also edited submissions to the missionary journals by the missionary women. This censorship produces silences in the missionary literature, topics or issues that are not discussed. Criticism of missionary society policies and discussions of sexuality or dangerous situations are noticeably absent from missionary journal articles.

Annual Reports to the mission committees in which missionary women outlined the problems and progress of their missionary work were a more formal form of interaction

⁵² Whitelaw, p.19

⁵³ A. K. Davidson, *Missionary Propaganda – Its early development and influence with respect to the British missionary movement in India*, (Dunedin, Presbyterian Historical Society of New Zealand, 1974), pp.6-7

between the women missionaries and their home societies. Missionary reports provide an insight into the administrative issues that the missionary women faced through their work in India. It was through Annual Reports that missionary women informed their home committees of their work for the year. The format usually consisted of an outline of the work done in the year at the mission and the responsibilities that the missionaries undertook. The report by Helen MacGregor in 1906 for example, summarised the fortunes of the mission for the year, which included a cholera epidemic. Helen MacGregor also provided a description of each school she was overseeing; the number of pupils in each, the type of instruction they received and a sketch of the area and the people among whom the school was situated.⁵⁴ The formal reports also allowed missionary women the opportunity to express their thanks and appreciation for money and support provided by both the Foreign Mission Committee and missionary supporters in the churches. In 1906 Helen MacGregor wrote of her gratitude for the gifts from the PWMU of dolls to "encourage attendance" at the schools and a baby organ to help with singing hymns.⁵⁵ In 1907 Helen MacGregor also acknowledged the importance of "knowing that so many, in all parts of New Zealand, are praying and working for me".⁵⁶

Problems and frustrations of mission work were also communicated to the New Zealand Mission Committees in the missionary women's Annual Reports. Health concerns of missionaries and pupils, money worries and worry over reductions in school rolls were

⁵⁴ "Appendix XXI – Foreign Missions Report – Report from Madras by Helen MacGregor", *PGA – Dunedin, November 1906* (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspaper Company, 1906), pp.200-201

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp.200-201

⁵⁶ "Appendix VI – Report of the Foreign Missions Committee – Miss MacGregors Report 1906-1907", *PGA – Wellington, November 1907*, (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspaper Company, 1908), p.119

discussed. Chapter Three will investigate the way in which the discussion of these issues by the missionary women demonstrates their participation in all levels of mission administration in the field. In doing so the missionary women were challenging the idea of separate spheres for male and female missionary workers. While moving into administration and communicating with a male administrative audience they continued to create and maintain their identity as professional women. While the missionary women were able to confess the problems and frustrations of missionary life in Annual Reports, this aspect of reporting had to be balanced with the other important role of these reports, which was to highlight the success of the mission project and justify the missionaries' continued presence there. This balancing of problems and optimism required tact and awareness from the women missionaries in India. The slow progress, in terms of the women's desired aim of converting India to Christianity, needed to be acknowledged but kept balanced by a continual optimism and a belief that the rewards for their work would eventually be realised. This balancing is evident in the way that the Presbyterian women missionaries quoted, as evidence of their impact and influence on the local community, the number of girls attending each school, rather than very modest figures of actual conversions.⁵⁷ The projected picture of success needed to be balanced by the missionary women against the need for missionary work to continue and the need to show the extent of the work still to be done. Reports also provided physical descriptions of pupils, accounts of social occasions, references to epidemics, national unrest and resistance by local Indians to Christianity, along with comments on

⁵⁷ A. Henderson, "Miss Henderson's Report", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (15), February 1909, p.vi; "Madras Zenana Mission", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (4), October 2nd 1893, p.72

government policies and issues relating to caste.⁵⁸ These commentaries by the missionary women have been invaluable in the analysis of the missionary perceptions of Indian landscapes, spaces, dress and bodies discussed in the second part of this thesis.

Published missionary promotional material consisting of pamphlets and tracts is also valuable in the analysis of missionary perceptions and expectations of India. Missionary pamphlets were an opportunity for the missionary rhetoric of rescuing to be represented with pictorial 'evidence'. Marina Chawla Singh argues that of any form of missionary literature the missionary pamphlet was the "most potent means of image projection".⁵⁹ These booklets were usually small, written in a semi-formal style and presented a combination of pictures and short narratives to highlight various aspects of mission work or to project a particular image of a country or area. These pamphlets were designed to be modest in size but with maximum impact on potential missionary supporters. These pamphlets were circulated among local church congregations at home and handed out to other potential missionary supporters. The pamphlet *Our Missionaries in India* printed and distributed by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1906 is one example of this kind of missionary promotional material. Like other missionary media it is hard to assess its impact on the New Zealand public but it was evidently considered sufficiently successful to be reprinted three times and in 1909 alone three thousand of these pamphlets were published.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ "Appendix VIA – Foreign Missionaries' Report India – Miss MacGregor's Report", *PGA – Dunedin, November 1908* (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspaper Company, 1908), p.103

⁵⁹ Singh, p.148

New Zealand missionary tracts and pamphlets followed the tendency to essentialise Indian culture found in international missionary rhetoric, and imperial rhetoric in general. Pamphlets displayed Indian culture as homogenous and legitimised their version of India by reference to the 'facts' and 'evidence' of mission work. The first section of the booklet *Our Missionaries in India* for example, was dedicated to the establishment of the 'facts' of mission work in India. The first page is devoted to demographic statistics to illustrate the progress of the Christian missions to date and the extent of the task still before them. This pamphlet also generalises Indian religious practices and highlights the areas that the missionaries wished to see reformed such as marriage practices and caste laws. A page and a half of text provides a sketch and criticism of Hinduism which shows little understanding of Hinduism's complexities. Without the relevant background knowledge the missionaries were unable to interpret correctly the religious activities and symbols they came into contact with and were forced to try to understand them in the context of their own religious experiences and discourses. Consequently, in the pamphlet the religious life of a Hindu was reduced to "elaborate ceremonies and festivals and pilgrimages to sacred shrines" which the missionaries felt had no worth or value in keeping with their Protestant distaste and disbelief in pageantry and idolatry as legitimate forms of religious worship.

Pamphlets typically reproduce information from a variety of sources. In *Our Missionaries in India* there are no references to indicate the sources of the ideas and information provided. Instead the general missionary rhetoric and interpretation of Hinduism is

⁶⁰ J. S. Shemld, Secretary of Literature Committee, "Report of Literature Committee", in "Appendix VIIA – Report of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of New Zealand", *PGA – Auckland, November*

presented as 'fact'. This simplified and misrepresented account of Hinduism was therefore presented as an authoritative account, claiming for the missionaries and the missionary societies the right to present and represent Hinduism to the pamphlet's audience in New Zealand. Missionary promotional material provides the historian with an insight into the images of India that were placed before missionary supporters and allows analysis of the assumptions which underlie the missionary perceptions of India.

Two of the missionary women are known to have written books on India both while they were there and once they arrived back in New Zealand. Beatrice Harband produced a large quantity of published material relating to her time spent in India and the studies she made of the country during this time. Although the actual books are lost to us, the list of her publications runs to five books written between 1901 and 1915 and three booklets.⁶¹ Miss Alice Henderson was also notable for her published accounts of her work in India. She wrote two books, *The Golden Gate of India* and "*The Shield of India*" – *A Study on India and the Punjab Mission of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*. These books are notable for their breadth of topics. While written in 1933 on her retirement Miss Henderson's book *The Shield of India*, is a good example of the wide range of topics covered in the women missionaries' writings. The book ranges from the examination of the Punjab's geography and climate to discussions of the great Indian epics and descriptions of missionary work.⁶² These books provide valuable information on specific areas of India, as well as highlighting the way in which the missionary women saw India

⁶¹ J. Sibree, (ed.), *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, etc. from 1796 to 1923*, (London, London Missionary Society, 1923), p.134

⁶² A. Henderson, "*The Shield of India*" – *A Study on India and the Punjab Mission of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, (Auckland, Foreign Missions Committee, NZPC, 1933), p.6

in general. By detailing instances in their missionary careers, these books prove valuable in investigating cultural contact encounters.

Unpublished Sources

Diaries and letters were the unofficial ways in which missionary women contributed to the missionary discourse on India. However, in the case of missionary writing there was no clear defining line between private and public correspondence as letters and diary extracts were often reproduced in published material, especially missionary journals, either in full or in an edited form. As Singh points out, letters written by missionary women show they were aware of the “interactive” nature of their personal writings. Missionary women sought to draw readers into sharing their experience of India and often required action on the reader’s part, asking, for example, for prayers and continued financial support. As a result, letters were more likely to list progress in the field rather than describe the trials or day to day routine of mission work.⁶³ Missionary women’s letters tended to show the women’s concern and emphasis on conversion and were didactic in tone with the constant aim of inspiring support of mission work, both monetary and emotional. Letters served as an important emotional link between missionary women and their family and friends⁶⁴ and provided a valuable source of information on India for those at home. Thus, while letters and private correspondence provides valuable details for the historian, one has to remember that they were written with the missionary women’s knowledge that they might be read by a wider public. Letters and correspondence consequently can not be read as the direct, unedited personal

⁶³ Singh, p.147

⁶⁴ Ibid.

thoughts and opinions of missionary women though they provide important insights into the missionary women's day to day experiences and their reactions to Indian communities.

Diaries are a valuable source for discovering the interactions between the missionary women and the Indian communities in which they worked. Emma Beckingsale, a missionary in India with the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society from 1895 to 1934, wrote detailed diaries of her work and travels and Elise Brown kept a diary of her work as a medical missionary from 1918 to 1923. These diaries allow some deeper insights into the reactions to India of the New Zealand missionary women and are sources of vivid description of the Indian environment and people. The diaries, while not written every day, also provide a reasonable record of the daily activities of the missionary women.

Unfortunately, the primary missionary sources provide little biographical information on the missionary women's lives before their entry into missionary work. Consequently such information has been collated from other sources and is often scarce. Information on the New Zealand missionary women's backgrounds, their schooling, families status and occupations, was drawn from a variety of sources ranging from school records and street directories to wills and shipping lists. The scattered and limited nature of this information on the missionary women's backgrounds means that there was not equal information on all of the missionary women, while a lot could be discovered on some women, other

women proved more elusive. Thus, by considering these women as a group we can develop a clearer picture of the motivations of these New Zealand missionary women.

Unfortunately, this thesis has been unable to draw on primary Indian sources and consequently the Indian perspectives of this cultural encounter have had to be reconstructed from the writings of the missionary women. Diaries, with their detail of everyday missionary work and contact with Indian communities provide clues to the behaviour and motivations of the Indian communities in which the missionary women worked, and help to return some agency to the Indian peoples discussed in this study. Remembered dialogues in diaries, while not faithful narrative accounts, do help to identify topics and viewpoints of conversation, thus providing an insight into Indians' opinions and perceptions.

STRUCTURE

In 1876, Miss Thorn, New Zealand's first missionary woman to India, left to work in India with the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. This thesis investigates the New Zealand missionary women who left to work in India between 1876 and 1920. This thesis aims to show that the missionary endeavour in India was not a simple linear colonial relationship between Britain and India, but involved the interactions of a western European culture and that of a perceived Indian one. Eric Hobsbawm dates the "Age of Empire" from 1875 to 1915.⁶⁵ Consequently, investigating New Zealand missionary women within this time frame also allows us to explore the relationship between the

⁶⁵ Huber and Lutkehaus, p.8

missionary endeavour and the imperial 'civilising mission'. Finishing this study in 1920 allows us to examine the cultural encounter experiences of the first generation of New Zealand missionary women, who were influenced by the feminist reforms, evangelical revivals and imperial ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While "men were carving up the tropical world", middle class women were moving beyond their homes to engage in teaching, nursing, philanthropy and missionary work.⁶⁶ One of the themes of this thesis is the intersection between feminist reforms of the period and imperialism and forging of colonial identities.

Victorian middle-class values ideally positioned women in the domestic sphere of home and family and expected that women would not work outside of the home.⁶⁷ The foreign missionary movement of the nineteenth century reflected these gender ideologies with women's participation in the foreign missionary cause dominated by the ideals of domesticity. Women in Britain, America and the settler colonies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand participated as supporters and fundraisers for missions at home. In the foreign mission field women were restricted to the role of 'helpmeet' to missionary husbands. Missionary wives were often required to administer homesteads and mission stations while their husbands travelled on preaching tours. The missionary wives' primary role and expected function was restricted by the Victorian gender ideology to maintaining a Christian household and providing support for their husband and family. Later decades of the nineteenth century however, saw a challenge to the gender ideologies of society in general, which impacted on the foreign missionary field by bringing the feminisation of

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Hall, p.65

mission. The feminisation of mission saw single women challenge the gender boundaries in the missionary field and become foreign missionaries in their own right. Chapter One investigates the masculine nature of the foreign missionary movement in the nineteenth century and the way in which this was challenged by the feminisation of mission in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. Thirty-four New Zealand women were a part of this movement.

Chapter Two examines the ways in which New Zealand missionary women challenged gender boundaries by undertaking foreign missionary work and some of the motivations for their doing so. New Zealand missionary women chose to remain single in order to follow a vocation, the vocation of foreign missionary work, which was for many of the women an extension of their existing vocations of teaching, nursing and deaconess work. Foreign missionary work also offered the opportunity for travel and adventure and the challenges and experiences of living and working in a foreign country. In choosing to become foreign missionaries the New Zealand women challenged accepted gender norms, and were thus examples of the wider feminist reforms of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These feminist reforms, including the feminisation of mission, were liberal in nature because they justified women's new public role as an extension of their domestic responsibilities.

In addition to being examples of reform, New Zealand missionary women were agents of reform. Chapter Three explores the feminist and evangelical ideas of reform, which justified and motivated New Zealand missionary women. Feminist ideas of reform

promoted women as morally superior and thus able to perform a socially redemptive role. Feminism is a complex and shifting term and its meaning has changed over time and the contexts and groups with which it has been associated. Feminism in the decades at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, was not one coherent movement. Instead, feminism was a series of reform movements that centred on women, varying from campaigns for women's higher education to campaigns for women's suffrage and labour reforms. Olive Banks defines feminist reform as: "Any groups that have tried to change the position of women, or ideas about women."⁶⁸ This definition allows for the variety of reform that was undertaken as part of feminism in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. New Zealand missionary women were both examples and agents of specific elements of this wider feminist reform movement. Evangelical concepts of reform centred on the process of conversion and the figure of Christ as an example of a Christian life. These evangelical concepts of reform were combined by the missionary women with their feminist ideas of reform.

Chapter Four investigates the development in the international missionary literature of the concept of global sisterhood and the paradoxical but parallel image of the degraded Indian woman. The concept of global sisterhood was a convergence of interdependent ideas from evangelical Christianity, imperialism, and feminism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The concept of empire was a central element to life in Britain and the settler colonies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a sense of imperial consciousness based on racial superiority underpinned colonial identities. By the

⁶⁸ Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981), p.3

late nineteenth century this imperialist consciousness centred not just around the political and economic system of colonies governed from an imperial centre, but also included the spread of the centre's cultural values to the peripheries of empire. This 'civilising mission' combined with the political and economic facets of empire. Global sisterhood was an imperial stratified concept with women from Britain, America and the settler colonies, including New Zealand. They believed in their superior status in comparison with the other women of empire, because of their belief in the emancipated position of women within their home societies. By contrast Indian women were portrayed in missionary literature as degraded women, victims of a corrupted and corrupting patriarchal religion. The ideas of global sisterhood convinced New Zealand women that they had a duty to raise their Indian 'sisters' to their own exalted status, which was to be achieved through Christianity. New Zealand missionary women therefore constructed for themselves an identity as rescuers of Indian women.

Feminist historical geographers writing on empire have sought to "reinterpret past places and landscapes from women's point of view".⁶⁹ Chapter Five seeks to add to this literature by unpacking the New Zealand missionary women's expectations and constructions of Indian space and landscape. New Zealand missionary women's expectations of India were drawn from the wider discursive frameworks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly of Romanticism, Orientalism and Reform. These frameworks provided the way in which New Zealand missionary women constructed Indian landscapes and living spaces. In the missionary women's

⁶⁹ K. M. Morin and L.D. Berg, "Emplacing Current Trends in Feminist Historical Geography", *Gender, Place and Culture*, 6 (4), 1999, p.320

constructions of Indian landscapes and spaces they created a dichotomy between the idealised and arcadian rural landscapes and the populated spaces of the urban environment which were predominantly portrayed with reference to the reform influenced paradigms of cleanliness. While the missionary women's preconceived ideas of India greatly influenced their constructions of Indian landscapes and spaces in their writing, they were nuanced by their interactions with the Indian communities in which they worked. Ideas of class and caste impacted profoundly on the missionary women's interpretations of these Indian spaces.

Dress in any historically specific time and space communicates a complex mix of ideas about identity⁷⁰ including information on ethnicity, gender and social standing. In the cultural encounter between New Zealand missionary women and Indian women, dress provided a means for communicating between cultures very different concepts of ideal womanhood and femininity. Chapter Six will investigate how the New Zealand missionary women's ideas of gender and femininity combined with the paradigms of cleanliness and the preconceived image of degraded Indian women to influence the way in which the missionary women perceived and wrote about Indian women and the cultural contact experience.

⁷⁰ J. B. Eicher, (ed.), *Dress and Ethnicity – Change Across Space and Time*, (Oxford, Berg, 1995), p.1

CHAPTER ONE

THE FEMINISATION OF MISSION: CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN FOREIGN MISSIONARY WORK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the late nineteenth century, increasing numbers of single women in English speaking countries undertook foreign missionary work. This international trend was both a result of and an impetus for change in wider social gender roles. For most of the nineteenth century foreign missionary work was seen as a masculine endeavour, supported by an heroic and military rhetoric. The missionary movement reflected the wider gender ideologies of the middle classes that promoted separate spheres of activity for men and women. Ideally, women's role was as a helpmeet to their husbands with the home their sphere of activity. Missionary wives were expected to conform to this ideal. New Zealand followed this pattern of gendered divisions in missionary activities with the domination of missionary administrations by men and the relegation of women to the roles of missionary wives and fundraisers. However, the late nineteenth century saw a significant shift in these gender relations as large numbers of single women moved into the foreign missionary field. While women set up independent missionary societies in the United States and in Britain, such as the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS),¹ the NZBMS and the missionary committees of the NZPC remained patriarchal. However, the entry of single women into the mission field challenged its

¹ J. Morawiecki, "The Peculiar Mission of Christian Womanhood": The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society 1880-1920," (PhD, University of Sussex, 1998), pp.26-27

status as an uniquely masculine domain. It allowed Protestant women the right to undertake a vocation within the church and allowed them the opportunity to undertake serious, theologically based studies. The feminisation of mission also allowed women to gain recognition in the church and community for their public roles and ended the masculine monopoly of missionary martyrdom in the Protestant churches.

GENDER AND NINETEENTH CENTURY MISSION

To understand the feminisation of the foreign missionary field in the later nineteenth century it is necessary to understand the masculinity of the earlier missionary period. Until the late nineteenth century, the Protestant foreign missionary movement was masculine in both ideology and practice. There was a perception by the mission societies, as well as the public, that foreign missionary work was a sphere of masculine activity.² White middle class women were not entirely absent from the missionary world prior to the late nineteenth century. White women undertook mission work as sisters and wives to male missionaries but their work was constrained by the gender ideologies of the time.

Historically, mainstream protestant missionary societies characterised mission work as clerical and therefore the domain of theologically trained workers.³ Missionary work was consequently a masculine and a public sphere activity as this definition of missionaries as clerics excluded women. Women were prevented from undertaking official theological

² S. Thorne, "Missionary – Imperial Feminism", Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus (eds.) *Gendered Missions: Women and Man in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.40

and clerical study because they were not able to attend and study theology at universities. It was 1877 when Kate Edgar became the first woman in New Zealand to gain a Bachelor's degree from Auckland University.⁴ Even so, women were refused ordination in most mainstream protestant churches in New Zealand until the middle of the twentieth century.⁵

A few pioneer single women did work in the foreign mission fields in this early period. However, they were almost without exception sisters or widows of missionaries and were considered lay workers and therefore, inferior missionaries. Unlike male lay missionaries, women could never receive ordination or advance their prospects,⁶ and their role, like that of the missionary wife, was seen by mission societies as that of helpmeet to the male missionaries. While many women who became missionary wives actively chose this life out of religious conviction and a deep sense of duty to the missionary cause,⁷ their lives as missionary wives relied on the prior missionary activity of men.⁸

Judith Rowbotham argues that the masculinity of the early missionary movement is evident in the missionary literature and rhetoric of the late nineteenth century, which

³ Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p12

⁴ S. Coney, (ed.), *Standing in the Sunshine: A History of New Zealand Women Since They Won the Vote*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), p.206

⁵ "Time Line", D. McEldowney, (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa 1840 – 1990*, (Wellington, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.195

⁶ J. Murray, "Gender Attitudes and the Contribution of Women to Evangelism and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century", J. Wolffe, (ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal – Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980*, (London, SPCK, 1995), p.103

⁷ D. Kirkwood, "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters", F. Bowie, D. Kirkwood and S. Ardener, (eds.) *Women and missions: Past and Present - Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, (Providence, Berg, 1993), p.25

⁸ P. Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty – American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Hawaii*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1989), p.6

draws on the Victorian penchant for popular biographies and hagiographies, centred on the heroism or martyrdom of their subject. In line with gender constructs of the late nineteenth century, heroic status in missionary literature was the preserve of men, as it required the undertaking of valiant deeds in dangerous or barbaric surroundings in the name of empire or religion, or preferably both. In these biographic accounts women only participated as dependants of their male counterparts' heroism.⁹

Rowbotham's work also suggests that the use of war imagery in mission literature further demonstrates the androcentric nature of Victorian missionary ideology for most of the nineteenth century. Missionary work was seen as a religious war waged against the heathen, which paralleled, and was linked to, the secular and political wars of British imperialism. Militaristic terms were employed in hymns, sermons and missionary literature, referring to the 'Soldiers of Christ', the weaponry and armour of God, and the concepts of defending and extending God's kingdom on earth.¹⁰ The perception of mission work as a sphere of masculine activity was further reinforced by the dominance of males in the structure of mission societies.

The power relations within the missionary societies in Britain and the British settler societies also highlighted the masculinity of the nineteenth century protestant missionary movement. While women were involved in the missionary movement from the beginning, their place for most of the nineteenth century was restricted to a supporting role. From the start, women played a predominant and important role at local level,

⁹ J. Rowbotham, "'Soldiers of Christ'? Images of Female Missionaries in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain: Issues of Heroism and Martyrdom", *Gender & History*, 12 (1), April 2000, pp.84-86

especially in auxiliaries and in fundraising. However, they were invisible in the upper hierarchies of missionary societies and men dominated in the public and administrative roles at the local level. Men organised anniversary meetings, wrote reports and correspondence, took charge of receipts and bookkeeping as well as dominating speaking positions at public meetings, churches and Sunday schools.¹¹

In the major British missionary societies women were prevented from undertaking positions in the governing committees, and were often restricted from having a public voice, or taking part in the society's decision making process. In the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), despite women being numerically dominant at public meetings, they were denied speaking privileges and received no representation on any of the society's committees.¹² Women were encouraged to undertake the role of collectors and organisers of fundraising, especially of the fundraising activities conducted by children, which became increasingly important and profitable.¹³ While the Scottish Missionary Society (SMS) called on women to donate their money and fundraising skills to the cause, women were also denied any say in how this money was spent.¹⁴ In 1821, a Ladies' Auxiliary Society was formed in Lanark, Scotland. However, it perpetuated the same roles for women by focusing on the supporting, yet subordinate, role of raising funds for the parent society.¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid., p.85

¹¹ Thorne, 1999, p.42

¹² B. Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792 – 1992*, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1992), p.228

¹³ Ibid., p.228

¹⁴ E. G. K. Hewat, *Vision and Achievement 1796 – 1956: a history of the foreign missions of the churches united in the Church of Scotland*, (London, Nelson, 1960), p.11

Women were also present in the foreign missionary field during the nineteenth century but, as in the home missionary structures, their work was not given official recognition or appreciation. While men were first to undertake overseas missionary work, in most British and American societies they were expected to be married before departure.¹⁶ Thus, from the start of the foreign missionary movement there were women who sought active service as wives to missionaries.

Women's reasons for undertaking this work were multiple and complex, from a strong belief in the missionary cause, to a wish for adventure or out of love and duty towards their missionary husbands.¹⁷ However, as historians Patricia Grimshaw and Maina Chawla Singh reveal, these women's active work as missionaries was restricted because of their subordinate status and their wifely responsibilities.¹⁸ Though these women were unsalaried and their work often received little attention or recognition, each was expected to support their husband's work by visiting homes and instructing girls and women in reading and housework.¹⁹ Moreover, in their husband's absence missionary wives were required to undertake the day to day running of entire mission stations.²⁰ However, their first responsibility was the maintenance of a Christian home, both as a refuge for their husbands and as a showcase of British, or American civilisation and domesticity.²¹ As Patricia Grimshaw argues, these women were expected to portray a picture of Western femininity as idealised in the concepts of separate spheres for male and female activity

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kirkwood, p.26

¹⁷ M. C. Singh, *Gender, Religion and "Heathen Lands": American Missionary Women in South Asia (1860s-1940s)*, (New York, Garland, 2000), p.78

¹⁸ P. Grimshaw, 1994, p.xxii; Singh, p.79

¹⁹ Singh, p.79

²⁰ Ibid., p.89

and through the cult of domesticity.²² White middle class women from Britain, American and British settler colonies thus already participated in the missionary endeavour during the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century as wives of missionaries and as fundraisers.

Women also had a restricted role in the Presbyterian Church in nineteenth century New Zealand. While there has been little scholarly work done on women's roles in the church and the importance of religion to women in nineteenth century New Zealand, women did play a vital role in the early histories of the New Zealand churches. As in the case of female missionary supporters, women's tasks were limited to the domestic sphere and included running fundraising bazaars, decorating church buildings, catering for church functions and looking after the young, the sick and the elderly.²³ Before the 1880s, it was considered acceptable for married upper-class women to undertake social service work, but beyond Sunday school teaching and bible classes, there was little scope for single women to undertake a wider and more productive role in the church.²⁴

These gendered divisions in the missionary world reflected the nineteenth century Victorian discourse, in which respectable women's work ideally centred on the private sphere of home and family.²⁵ These Victorian beliefs, concerning the gendered separation of the public and private sphere, had developed from the changing industrial and

²¹ Ibid., p.79

²² P. Grimshaw, 1994, p.xxii and 7

²³ I. Breward, "1871 – 1901 Clamant Needs, Determined Battlers", Denis McEldowney, (ed.) *Presbyterians in Aotearoa*, Wellington, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), pp.64-65

²⁴ Ibid., pp.64-65

²⁵ C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), p.75.

commercial world of the nineteenth century and the resulting changes in the gendered division of labour. A consensus developed among the middle and upper classes that women should ideally be removed from public employment and productive labour and that the responsibility of breadwinning should solely fall upon the males of the family.²⁶ This gendered separation of labour was reflected in the missionary world where male missionaries undertook evangelising work and women were expected to maintain and protect the home sphere from foreign or immoral influences. Missionary work was thus not seen as suitable for women as it required public speaking and preaching, independent travelling, and undertaking negotiations with local leaders and colonial officials, all of which would have meant an inversion of the dominant Victorian ideology of separate spheres in which such public work was the designated arena of men.

The Victorian ideas of the gendered divisions of labour are evident in the early missions of the New Zealand Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church continued the pattern of patriarchal dominance, which was reflected in its mission policies. Before the 1870s, the focus was on male missionaries supported by a family committed to the same Christian values. For example, the New Zealand Presbyterian churches²⁷ had sent out Mr and Mrs Watt in 1866²⁸ and Mr and Mrs Milne in 1867²⁹ to the New Hebrides. While Victorian gendered divisions of labour were central to the style of missionary work undertaken by the New Zealand churches in the nineteenth century, men also dominated

²⁶ Grimshaw, 1989, p.74

²⁷ The New Zealand Presbyterian Church was still two separate churches, the Northern Church of New Zealand and the Church of Otago and Southland.

²⁸ J. R. Elder, *The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840 – 1940*, (Christchurch, Presbyterian Bookroom, [1940]), p.272

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.274

the mission committees and organisations at home in New Zealand. Whereas women were active and visible in the church of their local communities, they possessed no formal power within the church structure.³⁰ Women's place in the church, like their place in society in general, was to be the helpmeet and provide the support networks for their men.

In the nineteenth century the New Zealand missionary societies of the main churches were patriarchal institutions and this continued into the early twentieth century. For example, while women became increasingly prominent as missionaries and workers at home participating in "women's work for women", men still dominated the upper echelons of missionary societies until well into the twentieth century. By the 1930s women in the New Zealand Presbyterian church still did not have a formal position on the courts and Assembly committees. However women's organisations such as the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) and Young Women's Bible Class Union (YWBCU) had gained honorary representatives on the advisory board of the National Assembly.³¹ While the NZBMS was formed in 1885 with the initial aim of sending single women missionaries to India, the formal decision making bodies remained patriarchal. The mission committee comprised of prominent ministers within the union³² who were "leading enthusiasts for the Foreign Mission project".³³ Despite the patriarchal nature of New Zealand missionary societies at the end of the nineteenth century and the

³⁰ P. Matheson, "1840 – 1870 The Settler Church", Denis McEldowney (ed), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa*, (Wellington, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.38

³¹ A. Davidson, "1931 – 1960 Depression, War, New Life", Denis McEldowney (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa*, (Wellington, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.111

³² Most notably Rev. H.H. Driver, Rev. Alfred North, Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, Rev. Charles Dallaston and Mr S.H. Matthews, E. P. Y. Simpson, "A History of the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society 1885 – 1947", (MA (Hist), University of New Zealand, 1948), p.39

established tradition of women in the missionary field as wives and domestic helpmeets, the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed a reformation with the entry of single missionary women into the foreign missionary field.

FEMINISATION OF MISSION

The later decades of the nineteenth century saw a shift in the role women played in foreign missions especially in India. Many historians have commented on this "feminisation" of the missionary movement in the decades that surround the turn of the century.³⁴ This feminisation of mission involved the movement of single women into the foreign mission field as professional missionaries. So great was this change in the gender balance of active missionaries that by the turn of the century women threatened to outnumber male missionaries.³⁵ The Church Missionary Society (CMS) provides a good example of this dramatic increase in the number of female missionaries. In 1887 the CMS had twenty-two single women missionaries. By 1898 this had risen considerably to 254, and by 1907 there were over one thousand single women missionaries in China alone.³⁶ The expansion of women's role within the mission field is also highlighted by the fact that in 1887 while there were 2908 ordained missionaries from Britain working overseas, there were also 2322 women missionaries working in foreign missionary

³³ Ibid., pp.46-47

³⁴ For discussions of the feminisation of mission in America see L. N. Predelli and J. Miller, "Piety and Patriarchy: contested gender regimes in nineteenth-century evangelical missions"; Huber and Lutkehaus; P. Hill, *The World their Household: The American Women's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1985). J. Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, c.1984). For Canada see R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient 1882-1925*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992) and for Britain see Thorne, "Missionary-imperial feminism",

³⁵ Rowbotham, "'Soldiers of Christ'?", p.99

³⁶ J. Godden, "Containment and control: Presbyterian women and the missionary impulse in New South Wales", *Women's History Review*, 6 (1), 1997, p.78

fields.³⁷ According to *The Year Book of Mission in India, Burma and Ceylon* in 1912, single women missionaries made up thirty-one percent of the total foreign missionary population.³⁸ This trend was not restricted to the British missionary movement as it was just as prominent in the American missionary societies, with women consisting of more than half of the American missionaries in the foreign field by the 1890s.³⁹ This movement was intrinsically connected with the increasing support and participation by women at home in the churches and the feminisation of the structures of the British, American and white settler colonies' mission societies. In America, by 1915, the women's foreign missionary movement with its membership of three million fee paying American women eclipsed the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) making it the largest of all the late nineteenth century women's movements.⁴⁰ New Zealand also contributed to this movement of single women into the role of foreign missionary. From 1876 to 1920 thirty-four single Protestant New Zealand women undertook work on the Indian sub-continent. Two others applied, but were prevented from going to India because of ill health, and there were several applications for which the outcome could not be discovered.

While the majority of New Zealand missionary women worked for the New Zealand Presbyterian and Baptist church missions, some worked for overseas, mainly British, missionary organisations. The first female missionary to be sent out to India from New Zealand was Miss Thorn who went out under the British based Zenana Bible and Medical

³⁷ Ibid., p.78

³⁸ Morawiecki, p.90

³⁹ Godden, p.78

⁴⁰ Hill, p.55

Mission (ZBMM) in 1875.⁴¹ The New Zealand missionary societies received more applications from single women than they could afford to send. Consequently, women who wished to undertake missionary work, but for whom there was no available position in the New Zealand missionary societies, applied to British and other overseas-based mission societies. There was co-operation between the New Zealand and overseas societies in the recruiting of single women missionaries. Annie Newcombe was recruited from Australia for the NZBMS in 1887⁴² and the NZPC forwarded the application of Miss McPhail onto the Scottish Presbyterian Church in 1902.⁴³ Some New Zealand missionary women, like Alice Henderson, worked for different missionary organisations during her career in India. Alice Henderson began work as a missionary for the New Zealand Women's Missionary Society (WMS),⁴⁴ before the NZPC and the United Free Church of Scotland (UFCS) jointly employed her in Madras,⁴⁵ and in 1909 she moved to the Punjab to work solely for the NZPC.⁴⁶

Women in New Zealand followed the pattern in Britain and America by organising their own separate missionary societies. This gave them the opportunity to structure and organise the societies according to the women's own interests and needs and provided a public role in the church in which women could more actively participate.⁴⁷ In 1892, an interdenominational society, the WMS was established in Dunedin by Mrs Jane

⁴¹ J. C. Pollock, *Shadows Fall Apart: The Story of the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), p.47

⁴² "N.Z.B.M.S Our Second Missionary Lady", *The New Zealand Baptist*, July 1887, p.105

⁴³ A. M. Milligan to Mrs. W. Hewitson, 10 July 1902, MS7630-409, Letterbooks of Women's Association for Foreign Missions, 1885 – 1926, Church of Scotland Records 1848-1931 (ATL)

⁴⁴ Y. Robertson, "Association of Presbyterian Women 1896 - ", Ann Else (ed.) *Women Together*, (Wellington, Historical Branch, 1993), p.168

⁴⁵ Minute No.69, *PGA – Wellington, November 1902*, p.36

⁴⁶ Appendix VII – Report of the Foreign Missions Committee, *PGA – Christchurch, October 1909*, p.89

Bannerman, the wife of a prominent Presbyterian minister, to support the work of female missionaries in the *zenanas* of India. This was a national and interdenominational organisation. In Otago it was dominated by Presbyterians although it received strong support from Presbyterian women in Christchurch and Dunedin. It was the WMS which originally supported the two Presbyterian women missionaries, Miss Helen MacGregor and Miss Alice Henderson, who went to India to work at the UFCS Mission in Madras. In 1896, the Otago and Southland Synod was asked by Mrs Margaret Hewitson to approve the formation of the Otago and Southland Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, the resolution passing the Synod by one vote. In 1902, three more regional Women's Missionary Unions were formed in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. In 1905, they came together to form the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of New Zealand (PWMU), which had the aim of supporting church missionaries and distributing information through the New Zealand Presbyterian church.⁴⁸ Younger women and girls also came to be incorporated into the women's missionary movement with the establishment of the Busy Bees in 1909,⁴⁹ and the Girl's Auxiliary in 1915.⁵⁰ Hence, the feminisation of the missionary field also provided an extended role in the churches for Presbyterian women at home in New Zealand.

Overseas missions also gave the women of the Baptist Church of New Zealand the opportunity to widen their sphere of participation in the church. Baptist women supported the establishment of the NZBMS formed in 1885. However, it was not until 1903 that a

⁴⁷ I. Breward, , p.66

⁴⁸ Elder, p.315

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.318

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.316

separate women's missionary organisation was established by a returned missionary from India, Miss Annie Newcombe, to focus the fundraising efforts and prayer of Baptist women supporting mission throughout the country and to ensure the dissemination of more accurate information on mission progress. Women's work in the Baptist Women's Missionary Union (BWMU) was acknowledged with the decision to allow women equal speaking rights at the NZBMS annual meetings as well as the Baptist General Assemblies.⁵¹

The feminisation of mission challenged the concept that the foreign mission field and the administration of mission societies were uniquely masculine domains. With the increase in numbers of women undertaking mission work from Britain by the 1870s there were increasing calls by mission administrators for the missionary women to be better prepared and to have suitable theological as well as practical training. Jennifer Morawiecki demonstrates in her thesis on the CEZMS the way in which women missionaries were trained in specific institutions that provided basics in theology and church history.⁵² This increased focus on training for women missionaries was also reflected in the training for deaconesses.⁵³ Deaconesses were single women employed by the Protestant churches from the mid-nineteenth century in Britain⁵⁴ and from 1901 in New Zealand.⁵⁵ Their role was to provide outreach to the local communities and parishes and to "provide material

⁵¹ E. E. Bolitho, "Baptist Women's Ministries 1947-", Ann Else (ed.) *Women Together*, (Wellington, Historical Branch, 1993), p.186

⁵² Morawiecki, pp.39-40

⁵³ Ibid., p.178

⁵⁴ K. M. Piercy, "'Presbyterian Pioneers' – The Deaconess Movement, Dunedin 1900 – 1920", (BA(Hons) Research Essay, University of Otago, 2000), p. 9

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.11

support, counselling and institutional care”.⁵⁶ There was considerable cross-over in ideology, personnel and training between these two areas of work.⁵⁷

The trend towards specialised training in mission work was also reflected in New Zealand through the work of Mrs H.H. Driver, nee Miss Annie Newcombe,⁵⁸ who had been the second woman to go to India with the NZBMS. In 1898 Mrs Driver set up a private interdenominational training institute to train missionary women and other female church workers.⁵⁹ The training institute was taken over by the NZPC in 1903.⁶⁰ The two year training course involved study in English, languages, study of the Old and New Testaments, church history, systematic theology and comparative religion.⁶¹ The role of missionary had come to provide an opportunity for women to undertake a vocation within the church and provided the opportunity for studying and applying theology that was not provided for them elsewhere.

The feminisation of mission also allowed women to gain status within the church for their public roles. In New Zealand, the missionary women were looked on with a sense of pride by their home churches. In *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, the president Mrs Hewitson describes Misses Henderson, Macgregor and Geisen as “workers...of whom any missionary society might be justly proud”.⁶² Frequent letters published in church journals and the missionary women’s national tours and speaking engagements when

⁵⁶ Tennant, 1998, p.4

⁵⁷ Morawiecki, p.178

⁵⁸ “Our Gallery of Ex-Missionaries”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1931, p.146

⁵⁹ Piercy, p.21

⁶⁰ J. M. Blackie, “Presbyterian Women’s Training Institute”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, April 1907, p.iii

⁶¹ Piercy, p.27

home on furlough, meant that the New Zealand missionary women became well known figures in the New Zealand church communities. In 1909, Alice Henderson was invited to address thirty-one meetings around Auckland within a month.⁶³ The status of the missionary women within the church communities was also enhanced by the distribution of posters displaying their photographs, which were delivered and hung in vestries, classrooms and church halls.⁶⁴

The feminisation of mission also saw the end of martyrdom as the sole preserve of male missionaries.⁶⁵ In the 1890s, the first deaths of female missionaries on active service challenged traditional missionary male privilege as expressed in their exclusive right to be martyrs for their cause. In missionary evangelical thought it was believed that to die in the service of Christ was the ultimate privilege for a true believer. For example, *The New Zealand Baptist* hailed former Baptist missionaries as those who “have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus”.⁶⁶ However, while single missionary women gained the opportunity to “venture life and all for His sake”,⁶⁷ missionary women were remembered in terms appropriate to traditional feminine ideals.⁶⁸ Emphasis was placed on the female martyr’s devotion and passive endurance.⁶⁹

⁶² Mrs. Hewitson, “Our Own Foreign Missionaries at Work”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, December 1908, p. viii

⁶³ “Writing for the Outlook”, September 8th 1909, Staff Files – Miss A. E. Henderson, 1909 – 1918, Punjab Mission, GA0149 (PCANZ)

⁶⁴ “Appendix XXII – Foreign Mission Report – General”, *PGA – Wellington*, November 1902, p.181; “Our Gallery of Ex-Missionaries”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1931, p.146

⁶⁵ Rowbotham, 2000, p.82

⁶⁶ “Our Gallery of Ex-Missionaries”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1931, p.146

⁶⁷ “Death of Miss Pillow”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1895, p.114

⁶⁸ Rowbotham, 2000, pp.86-87

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.84

While none of the New Zealand women missionaries in India died violent deaths, at least three of them died in India, or on the journey home, and were subsequently remembered in heroic and martyrological rhetoric. Rosalie MacGeorge died in Ceylon in 1891 on her way home⁷⁰ and Jessie Blair died at Poona Mission Station of Typhoid Fever.⁷¹ Hopestill Pillow died in Calcutta in 1895, and her obituary in *The New Zealand Baptist* in August of that year reflected in heroic terms her life and death. The writer encouraged the readers to be comforted by memories of Rosalie and Hopestill, “sainted women who went on our behalf”.⁷² Readers were also encouraged to remember the “costliness and hazardousness of this holy work.” and “the claims of Christ upon us”. The writer continued: “If our missionary rejoiced to lay her life upon the alter of service and sacrifice, it is only a small thing for us to devote our contributions.”⁷³ A mixture of martyrological rhetoric and reference to traditional womanly virtues is evident in the reference to her “faithful and useful life, and her peaceful and triumphant death”.⁷⁴

While the feminisation of foreign missions meant that a specific feminine martyrological rhetoric developed, the masculine rhetoric of warfare from earlier in the nineteenth century continued its currency and was applied equally to male or female missionary activity. Mary Kennedy for example is described in her valedictory speech as “going to the front of Christ’s marching army”.⁷⁵

⁷⁰Obituary, *Otago Witness*, May 14th 1891, p.23

⁷¹Obituary, *Otago Witness*, November 28th 1900, p.37

⁷²“Death of Miss Pillow”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1895, p.114

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵“Departure of a Lady Missionary for India – Farewell Meeting and Presentation”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 21st 1908, p.8

The feminisation of the foreign missionary movement offered new opportunities for single women to broaden their role within the church and in the public sphere but there remained restrictions. The missionary societies and church administrations remained largely patriarchal and women's missionary societies were often absorbed into the traditional church structures, the WMS for example, being absorbed into the Presbyterian Church.⁷⁶ As Susan Thorne points out, the limits to missionary feminism were also the limits to the wider processes of feminism in Western societies at the time.⁷⁷ A complex mix of traditional and liberal ideals motivated women who were part of the feminisation of mission. Women justified their initial foray into the foreign mission field by arguing that it extended accepted models of women's behaviour and the ideals of domesticity. However, by extending these concepts into the public sphere of the missionary field, the women themselves by their status as single working women, were challenging these accepted ideals.

⁷⁶ Y. Robertson, 1993, p.168. For a discussion on the attempt of Australian women to maintain control over their women's missionary society see Godden

⁷⁷ Thorne, 1999, p.20

CHAPTER TWO

EXAMPLES OF REFORM:

MISSIONARY WOMEN AND THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

The single women who became missionaries did so as a result of a combination of traditional and liberal ideas regarding the role of women in society. In becoming missionaries these single women became both examples and agents of reform. These missionary women chose to remain single and to undertake a career in an age when motherhood and the home were the dominant vocation for middle class women. These were women who took advantage of the new opportunities of education for women and most had pursued some form of independent work before offering themselves for missionary service. Missionary service provided these women with a vocation which challenged gendered divisions of labour and provided opportunities for travel and adventure which they could not have gained at home in New Zealand. Such factors made these women examples of feminist reform. These women were representatives of first wave feminism, examples of the "New Woman".¹ While many of these women supported liberal feminist reforms such as women's suffrage, the missionary and feminist discourses of the time couched their mission work in terms of self-sacrifice and religious justification which made their status as single working women acceptable, and indeed

¹ For general literature on colonial feminism in New Zealand and 'New Women' see S. Coney (ed.) *Standing in the Sunshine*, (Auckland, Penguin, 1993), pp.14-15. Ann Else (ed.) *Women Together*, (Wellington, Historical Branch, 1993). B. Brooks, C. Macdonald and M. Tennant, (eds.), *Women in History*, (Wellington, Allen Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986); P. Bunkle and B. Hughes, (eds.), *Women in New Zealand Society*, (Auckland, Allen and Unwin, 1980). P. Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, 1987)

celebrated, by the wider public. Discussed below are the ways in which the missionary women embodied these feminist reforms.

MARITAL STATUS

For most of the nineteenth century the only acceptable career for middle class women was that of wife and mother.² However, the missionary women from New Zealand cited in this thesis chose, like the hundreds of others in Britain and the other British settler societies, to remain single and to enter upon a vocation that required, and was dependent upon, their single status. As has been outlined in the previous section, single women were required for mission work in India, and in other parts of Asia, because of the need to access Asian women within their own domestic spaces, and because the responsibilities of family prevented missionary wives from undertaking this work.

The missionary societies often gave the impression that in allowing women the opportunity to undertake mission work in India, they were providing an outlet for the good works and skills of those women who had not had the good fortune of finding a suitable marriage.³ However, this was not the case for these New Zealand women missionaries, who instead chose to commit themselves to a vocation which required them to remain single. Figures for the length of time the women spent in India are not available for all of the New Zealand women. However, from the dates we do have, it is evident that

² C. Swaisland, "Wanted – Earnest, Self-Sacrificing Women for Service in South Africa: Nineteenth-Century Recruitment of Single Women to Protestant Missions", F. Bowie, D. Kirkwood and S. Ardener, (eds.) *Women and Missions*, (Providence, Berg, 1993), p. 72

for many of the women their work in India was seen as a long term decision, a commitment to stay in India and make missionary work their life's vocation. Of the twenty-five women for whom we know the precise dates for their periods of work in India, seven were missionaries in India for over twenty years,⁴ with Joan Macgregor working in India for forty-five years.⁵ Another five women were missionaries for between ten and twenty years in India and seven worked in India for between five and ten years. Three women also died in service either in India or on their homeward journey.⁶ The missionary women considered their work a serious and permanent vocation, and committed themselves to long periods overseas unless significant circumstances, usually health or family reasons, forced them to return home. Of those who returned to New Zealand earlier than expected, many continued their involvement with the mission project, either undertaking home mission work or working for missionary societies. Elise Lilly, for example went to India with the Poona and India Village Mission (P&IVM) but because of poor health had to return home, where she continued her involvement in missionary circles as organising secretary of the ZBMM in New Zealand.⁷ Sisters, Amy and Beatrice Harband, both retired on health grounds from their missionary work with the London Missionary Society (LMS).⁸ Mary Salmond was also forced to return to New

³ J. Morawiecki, "The Peculiar mission of Christian Womanhood": The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society 1880-1920," (PhD, University of Sussex, 1998), p.55

⁴ This includes furlough periods, because when the missionary women were on furlough they were still active missionaries, paid by their mission societies.

⁵ "Well-known Missionary's Death", Newspaper Obituary, *Evening Star*, 6/9/46, *New Zealand Obituaries 1936 - 1946 - Vol.7, Mc.* (MR)

⁶ Rosalie Macgeorge died in 1891 in Kandy, Ceylon on her homeward journey, see Obituary, *Otago Witness*, May 14th 1891, p.23. Hopestill Pillow died in 1895 in Calcutta see "Death of Miss Pillow", *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1895, p.114. Jessie Blair died of Typhoid Fever at the mission station at Poona in 1900, see Obituary, *Otago Witness*, November 28th 1900, p.37

⁷ *The Outlook - A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XIV (9), March 2nd 1938

⁸ J. Sibree (ed.), *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, etc. from 1796 to 1923*, (London, London Missionary Society, 1923), pp.131 and 134

Zealand because of ill health but continued her association with the missionary cause as principal of the Presbyterian Women's Training Institute (PWTI) from 1929.⁹ Family matters forced the early return to New Zealand of both Edith Giesen¹⁰ and Lillian Lang¹¹ and health problems also prevented some women from starting their missionary work in India. Miss Kean was accepted as a missionary for the UFCS¹² and Miss Christensen for work for the NZPC,¹³ however both were prevented from leaving by health problems. In her thesis on Presbyterian women missionaries, Brooke Whitelaw argues that while women applying to the New Zealand Presbyterian Church were assessed on the same medical criteria as male applicants, they were "subjected to a more rigorous level of physical and psychological evaluation".¹⁴ Whitelaw states that this resulted in a significantly higher number of women than men being turned down for missionary service on the grounds of health.¹⁵

Not all of the missionary women remained single throughout their lives. Two, Isobel Milne and Annie Bacon, married while in India to other missionaries. These women were required to choose between continuing their work as single women missionaries and marrying, which required the abdication of their position and work to take up the role of

⁹ N. Burges, "Mary Salmond (1887-1979)" in J. Thomson, (ed.), *Southern People – A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, (Dunedin, Longacre Press and Dunedin City Council, 1998), p.440

¹⁰ "Giesen, Miss Edith H. M.", I. W. Fraser, *Register of Ministers 1840 to 1989*, (Lower Hutt, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.257

¹¹ L. H. Lang to Mr. Hewitson, December 30th 1906, Missions Convenor's Papers Inwards Correspondence Jan 1905 to Dec 1908, Foreign Missions Committee, GA0001 (PCANZ)

¹² W. Stevenson to Rev. J. Chishlom, May 28th 1903, MS 7930 – 11-12, Letterbooks of Women's Association for Foreign Missions, 1885 – 1926, Church of Scotland, Church of Scotland Records 1848-1931 (ATL) and W. Stevenson to Rev. W. Hewitson, June 2nd 1904, MS 7932 – 359, Letterbooks of convenors and secretaries of the Women's Foreign Mission Committee, 1876 – 1930, Free Church of Scotland, Church of Scotland Records 1848 – 1931(ATL)

¹³ "Christensen, Miss Laura M.A. M.Sc.", Fraser, p.133

¹⁴ B. Whitelaw, "A Message from the Missahibs: New Zealand Presbyterian Women Missionaries in the Punjab 1910-1940," (MA, University of Otago, 2001), p.61

missionary wife. This role still required missionary work but in both cases the women were required to give up their medical work and instead visit homes and look after the mission. Annie Bacon's status changed from single missionary to that of honorary missionary on her marriage and she was obliged to pass over her medical work to Emma Beckingsale.¹⁶ Isobel Milne was reluctant to give up her position as nurse at the hospital at Jagadhri on her marriage to the Reverend Riddle and negotiated with the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) to maintain her in her present position until the end of the war and until a replacement could be found and trained. In a letter to the secretary of the FMC of the NZPC Mr Alexander Don, Isobel stated that: "Even when that comes, it will not be easy to hand over the Hospital work".¹⁷ The gender ideology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that married women were expected not to work outside the home but to restrict themselves to the domestic sphere and the care of their husband and children.

The tension between the demands of love and the required behaviour that went with marriage and the freedom, but perhaps loneliness, of following one's vocation was a conflict that Alison Mackinnon sees as present in the lives of many of the first generation of professional and educated Western women.¹⁸ It is notable that the women who entered marriage attempted to bridge this gap by continuing to be deeply involved in the missionary world, as missionary wives or as key figures in missionary or church

¹⁵ Ibid., p.57

¹⁶ "N.Z.B.M.S. – Official Notes", *The New Zealand Baptist*, February 1899, p.26

¹⁷ Isobel Milne to Rev. A. Don, February 21st 1917, Letter 249, Punjab Mission - Staff files – Miss I. Milne (Mrs Riddle) 1908 to 1941, GA0149 (PCANZ)

¹⁸ A. Mackinnon, *Love and Freedom- Professional Women and the Reshaping of Personal Life*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.4

societies. Miss Newcombe married Mr H. H. Driver, whom she had met on furlough tours, after her stint as a missionary with the New Zealand Baptist Church and Victorian Presbyterian Church. She continued her involvement with the missionary cause and became the general secretary and treasurer of the Poona and India Village Mission society in New Zealand.¹⁹ Mildred Davey also continued to be involved in missionary circles after her marriage. Mildred, who married later in life, became Mrs P. H. Matthews,²⁰ and became a founding member of the Anderson's Bay P.W.M.U. and a prominent leader of both the local Bible Class and Busy Bee groups.²¹

Alternatively, some of the missionary women may have chosen to commit themselves to a vocation to avoid the stigma of single life at home. As has been mentioned, the predominant option for middle class women was that of marriage and domesticity. However, the "New Woman" of the turn of the twentieth century was educated and independent both socially and economically. To many, this rejection of the status quo, especially of marriage and family was seen as undermining the fabric of social cohesion.²² These "New Women" were criticised in New Zealand for ignoring their biological destiny as mothers, and for assuming roles that were considered for the sphere of men.²³ It is possible therefore that by continuing their working lives in a foreign

¹⁹ "Miss Mortons's Work in India", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (6), March 5th 1904, p.15

²⁰ J. D. Salmond, *By Love Serve – The Story of the Order of Deaconesses of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, (Christchurch, Presbyterian Bookroom, 1963), p.87

²¹ M. Hinchcliff, "In Memoriam...Mrs P. Matthews: One of Dunedin's First Deaconesses", *The Outlook*, August 13th 1958, p.27

²² Mackinnon, p.7; M. Vicinus, *Independent Women – Work and Community for Single Women, 1850 – 1920*, (Virago, 1985, London), p.3

²³ Coney, p.15

country and in religious service, the missionary women deliberately avoided some of this criticism.

Recent historical scholarship on independent and single women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has raised the possibility that some made the decision to remain single for reasons of sexual orientation.²⁴ While it is a possibility that this was a consideration for some of these missionary women, the nature of the historical record means that it is impossible to trace and draw definite conclusions about the sexuality of the single women missionaries. There is no direct evidence in the sources concerning the missionary women's sexuality. However, considering the view towards same sex relations at the time, it is unlikely that any of the women would have discussed this with any officials or written about this in diaries and letters that were likely to be published or read to the wider public. As Katie Pickles argues in relation to colonial academic women of the early twentieth century, sexology and psychology reinforced the negative representations of single women as "unhappy and unfulfilled through the lack of a family".²⁵ Therefore, useful work for single women that focused on domestic and family issues, such as teaching, social and reform work and caring professions such as nursing, "became known as substitutes for spinsters not having their own children".²⁶

²⁴ A. Oram, "Repressed and Thwarted, or Bearer of the New World? The Spinster in Inter-War Feminist Discourses", *Women's History Review*, 1, 1992, pp.413-433. S. Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: feminism and sexuality 1880 - 1930*, (London, Pandora, 1985). K. Holmes, "'Spinsters Indispensable': feminists, single women and the critique of marriage, 1890-1920", *Australian Historical Studies*, 110, 1998, pp.68-90

²⁵ K. Pickles, "Colonial Counterparts: the First Academic Women in Anglo-Canada, New Zealand and Australia", *Women's History Review*, 10 (2), 2001, p.280

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.281

CAREER OF USEFULNESS

Single women missionaries can be considered liberal feminist reformers because, although they sought an independent career, they sought such independence within socially acceptable frameworks. These frameworks drew upon reform ideas of useful work for single women, which entailed an extension of women's domestic and protective work in the home. In seeking independent careers these single missionary women from New Zealand were part of a wider trend during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which developed parallel to, and was connected with, the increased educational opportunities for middle-class women. During the late nineteenth century a greater number of women, especially those of the middle classes in Britain and English settler societies, sought a more productive life outside the limits of family and domesticity by choosing to undertake independent careers that either required or maintained their status as single women.²⁷

In Victorian ideology the single woman had occupied a rather ambiguous position.²⁸ Single women were expected to represent the ideal female qualities of self-sacrifice and spirituality but were marginalised because they were unable to exercise these ideal qualities through the roles of wife or mother. Until the middle of the nineteenth century it was expected within the middle classes that an unmarried daughter remain at home. However, by the end of the century, there were a significant number of women living

²⁷ Ibid., pp.273 – 297; D. Page, "The First Lady Graduates: Women with Degrees from Otago University, 1885 – 1900", B. Brookes, C. Macdonald and M. Tennant (eds.), *Women in History 2*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1992), p.98-128; Vicinus, pp.5-6

²⁸ Vicinus, p.3

outside traditional family arrangements and surviving on their own earnings.²⁹ As Martha Vicinus has argued, single women during the late nineteenth century took advantage of the changing social conditions that provided them with better education and the opportunities to undertake paid work,³⁰ in order to create an idea and reality of 'useful work' that extended traditional women's roles of nurturing and protecting.³¹ The idea of 'useful work' created a role for single women other than that of wife and mother, but it was a role that continued to utilise the traditional feminine qualities of self-sacrifice, domestic protection and moral guardianship.

New Zealand single missionary women in India were part of this trend towards useful and fulfilling independent work as an option to domesticity. In their writing it is evident that they perceived their work in India in this light. On her first day in India, Emma Beckingsale wrote in her diary: "This is Bengal where I hope to do my life [sic] work and these are the people whom I hope to help".³² Similarly Edith Giesen at the end of her career in India stated that the most satisfying thought was that her work had "been needed."³³ A report in *The NZ Presbyterian* on Helen MacGregor's arrival stated that: "Mrs Longhurst considers her a full-fledged missionary, having a career of usefulness before her."³⁴

²⁹ Ibid., p.6

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p.15

³² Emma Beckingsale Diaries - "Aden to Calcutta", December 25th 1895 (CBC)

³³ "Appendix VIIa – Foreign Missionaries' Reports – Miss Giesen's Report for 1909", *PGA – Christchurch, October 1909*, p.118

³⁴ "Report of the "Women's Missionary Association of New Zealand" For Year Ending September 30th, 1893", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (4), October 2nd 1893, p.72

DEMOGRAPHICS

Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus have suggested that demographic conditions in Britain in the nineteenth century contributed to the movement of women into the foreign mission field. They argue that a surplus of women in the middle and artisan classes made it harder for families to support unmarried daughters.³⁵ These single women, requiring a means to make a living, chose to work outside the family. Some attained a career in missionary service that gave them an alternative to marriage and also provided them with the opportunity to earn their own living. In 1862 W. R. Greg referred to the 1851 British census which showed a surplus of over one million unmarried women, and implied that they desired, yet were denied, marriage. The high number of unmarried women continued to cause concern into the next century.³⁶ However, Cecillie Swaisland in her work on the recruitment of missionary women for Africa argues that the surplus actually represented an increase in the number of older widows resulting from extended life expectancies, rather than the demographic from which single missionary women were drawn.³⁷ The presence of a surplus of older women could account for the large support base from which women's charities and mission societies could draw during this period as these women looked for a meaningful way to contribute at home. While the statistics do not support the presence of a surplus of young women, a belief in such a surplus may have been just as powerful. The very belief that there existed such a surplus of single women may have had the effect of a real surplus in motivating single middle class women to find an alternative to marriage or dependence upon their family.

³⁵ Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus (eds.) *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.9

³⁶ Swaisland, p. 72

³⁷ Ibid.

While New Zealand at the start of this period had a population in which males outnumbered females, by 1920 the proportions were considerably more equal. On the surface then, it appears that the argument for surplus females would not be a motivating factor in the decision by these New Zealand women to undertake mission work in India. However, Margaret Tennent³⁸ has pointed out that in the late nineteenth century New Zealand followed the pattern of a settling society, with the gradual equalisation of the sexes to the point where, in many towns, women outnumbered men. She argues that this is significant in the movement of more urban women into paid work and the formation of women's charitable and community organisations. She also stresses that an ageing population meant that there were proportionally higher numbers of older women who had both the time and the financial resources to undertake community work which provided workers for mission associations and fundraising. While the demographics of New Zealand's maturing society in the late nineteenth century provided a significant group of urban women to participate as mission supporters, fears of a surplus of young unmarried women appears to be a tenuous reason for New Zealand single women to undertake missionary work overseas. While in some urban centres, especially Christchurch and Dunedin, there were surpluses of single women in their twenties and thirties for the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries, the numbers are so small as to prove insignificant.³⁹ The ages of only eleven New Zealand women when

³⁸ M. Tennant, "Matrons with a Mission: Women's Organisations in New Zealand 1893-1915", (MA.(Hist), Massey University, 1976)

³⁹ "Part V – Conjugal Condition of the People - Table VIII – General Summary by Boroughs", *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand – Taken for the night of the 28th March 1886*, (Wellington, George Didsbury Government Printer, 1887), pp.191-192 and 194 –197; "Part V – Conjugal Condition of the People - Table IX – Conjugal Condition, Numbers and Ages – Summary by Boroughs", *Results of a*

they left for India could be discovered. They ranged from twenty-one to thirty-five, with a disproportionate number being over twenty-five.⁴⁰ Missionary societies increasingly preferred women who had gained some practical experience and the maturity to handle overseas missionary work. Ellen Arnold the Australian Baptist missionary on a tour of New Zealand to solicit support for the missionary endeavour noted her pleasure in the fact that in nearly every town young girls were voicing their willingness to become missionaries but lamented the fact that at “seventeen to twenty years of age – [they are] rather too young to go out this year”.⁴¹ That a disproportionate number of the missionary women’s known ages are over twenty-five also suggests that the women had already undertaken education and careers before choosing missionary work, as illustrated below.

New Zealand women who chose to undertake foreign missionary work challenged the status quo of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by electing to remain single and earn their own living by pursuing a vocation as missionary women in India. Their decision to offer themselves as missionaries for India was not a sudden break from an existing lifestyle. Instead these were women who had taken advantage of the newly opened educational opportunities for women in New Zealand and had already been engaged in work as teachers, nurses and deaconesses. Missionary work was an extension of this life, which provided further challenges and opportunities.

Census of the Colony of New Zealand – Taken for the night of the 5th April 1891, (Wellington, George Didsbury Government Printer, 1892), pp.242-245 and 246-251; “Part V- Conjugal Condition of the People – Table IX – Summary by Boroughs”, *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand – Taken for the night of the 12th April 1886*, (Wellington, George Didsbury government Printer, 1896), pp.242 and 247 and 249; “Part V – Conjugal Condition of the People – Table IX – Summary by Boroughs”, *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand - Taken for the night of 31st March 1901*, (Wellington, John MacKay Government Printer, 1902), pp.261-263 and 267-269

⁴⁰ See Appendix

⁴¹ “Miss Arnold’s Report”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, July 1892, p.107

EDUCATION AND VOCATION

Women's education was central to the feminist agenda of reform and was influential in New Zealand missionary women's decisions to undertake foreign missionary work. Their identity as educated women was also central to the way the New Zealand missionary women perceived Indian women and the nature of their work among them, which will be discussed in more detail in chapters five and six. Originally missionary societies in Britain, especially the more mainstream and traditional societies, were more interested in recruiting women on the basis of class, and preferred ladies of higher social standing, who could support themselves financially. Mission societies such as the CEZMS aimed initially at the cultured English 'ladies' of the upper and upper middle classes.⁴² However, towards the end of the nineteenth century as educational opportunities increased for girls, especially of the middle classes, there was a movement towards recruiting missionary women who were more suitably educated.⁴³ New Zealand also appears to follow this trend towards recruitment of educated women as missionaries.

The selection process for the Baptist women missionaries is undiscovered by historians but the process for the Presbyterian women missionaries has received excellent coverage in Brooke Whitelaw's thesis. While the process for selecting women missionaries before 1910 appears to have been rather informal and irregular, an official selection process based on advice and examples from missionary societies in America, England and Scotland was drawn up in 1910 by the FMC.⁴⁴ So only from this time can any comparison be made between those women putting themselves forward for service and

⁴² Morawiecki, p.4

⁴³ Ibid.

those who were accepted. Whitelaw argues that among the women who were accepted for mission work in India, most had been teachers or nurses and that the FMC, which by 1910 made selection decisions, considered "practical training and demonstrated academic ability" as prerequisites for undertaking missionary work in India.⁴⁵ While the FMC was actively choosing educated women it does not diminish the agency of the women themselves. Evidently, educated women were choosing to apply for positions as foreign missionaries, believing mission work to be a suitable sphere of activity for them, and an extension of the careers they had already chosen as teachers and nurses. One doctor, Miss Christensen, was chosen by the FMC to go to the Punjab in 1913 but was prevented from leaving at the last moment as her health was not seen as sufficiently strong to face the demands of the tropics.⁴⁶

Many of the Presbyterian women came from Dunedin and Dorothy Page has noted the links in Otago between the NZPC, Otago University and support for women's education. Page suggests the influence of Scottish ideas of equal access to higher education and reward on the basis of merit rather than a more patronage based system, might have been influential in creating greater support for women's education in Otago.⁴⁷ With its strong feminist movement in the late nineteenth century Christchurch was another area sympathetic to higher women's education and was also home to some of the more highly educated missionary women and their families.

⁴⁴ Whitelaw, p.45

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.55

⁴⁶ "Christensen, Miss Laura", Fraser, p.133

⁴⁷ Page, pp.99-100

The known educational histories of the New Zealand missionary women provides a picture of a group of women who were highly educated and trained for work outside the home, especially for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The decades surrounding the turn of the century saw a change in the way education was provided to children in New Zealand. While this increased the availability of education for girls, there were still limitations and females still represented the minority of students in higher education. Under the Education Act of 1877, primary education had become free for all children in New Zealand. However, the Act did not make primary education compulsory and in 1877 only thirty eight percent of pupils were girls.⁴⁸ The first state secondary school for girls in the Southern Hemisphere was Otago Girl's High School, which opened in 1871.⁴⁹ Consequently in late nineteenth century New Zealand, while there were still limitations, opportunities existed for those girls who wished for and possessed the financial backing necessary to undertake higher education. At this time however, New Zealand secondary schools were middle class institutions,⁵⁰ which took mainly fee paying students.⁵¹ Parents thus needed to have both the money and the inclination to educate their daughters.

The occupations of the parents of the missionary women testify to their middle income status. Two of the missionaries' fathers were farmers with their own land in Otago while three were in business or trade. Among the group were also a parish minister who had been a Professor at New College in Edinburgh before emigrating to New Zealand, a

⁴⁸ R. Fry, *It's Different for Daughters - A History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900-1975*, (Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1985), p.9

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.26

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.28

builder, a coach-builder, and the Milnes who were missionaries for the NZPC in the New Hebrides. These occupations were perceived in New Zealand as conferring respectability and middle class status. Both Alice Henderson and Mary Salmond also had mothers who had pursued independent careers as governesses before marriage. Page argues that educating their daughters was a process through which those in the middle class could raise their status both socially and economically.⁵²

The influence and support of family in the lives of these missionary women, especially in their quest for higher education and an independent career, is hard to gauge. Supportive attitudes towards female education were critical if girls were to take advantage of the new educational opportunities.⁵³ At least three of the women had parents who actively supported women's education. Helen MacGregor's father was active in the campaign to establish Waitaki Girls High School in 1887 in North Otago where two of her younger sisters later both attained the position of dux.⁵⁴ Alice Henderson's mother, Alice Connolly, was a governess and the family moved from the smaller town of Ashburton to the nearest city of Christchurch so that her children could receive a better level of education. Two of Alice Henderson's sisters, Christina and Stella, both received university qualifications and Christina was for a time the principle of Christchurch Girls' High School.⁵⁵ The absence of educational opportunities open to Sarah Salmond, the

⁵¹ Coney, pp.192-193

⁵² Page, p.106

⁵³ Ibid., p.105

⁵⁴ I. Breward, "MacGregor, James, 1829-1894, M8", C. Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), p. 287

⁵⁵ P.A. Sargison, "Henderson, Christina Kirk, 1861-1953, H28" and C. Broadbent, "Henderson, Stella May, 1871-1962, H29", C. Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), pp.208-209

mother of Mary Salmond, meant that she actively supported the education of all of her children, including her daughters, with Mary going on to graduate from Otago University with a MA in 1914.⁵⁶

While by the turn of the century the right of girls to a secondary education was established, fewer than five percent actually progressed to secondary school.⁵⁷ From 1873 women in New Zealand were admitted to study towards university degrees. Kate Millington Edger was the first women to graduate from a New Zealand university in 1877, and only the second woman graduate in the Commonwealth.⁵⁸ This group of missionary women was part of a generation of women in Britain, America and the settler colonies who were able to take advantage of newly gained rights to formal education.⁵⁹ Five out of the fifteen missionary women gained university degrees, with four continuing on to complete Masters degrees. Two of the other women had at least finished primary school and Emma Beckingsale attended Otago Girls' High School.⁶⁰

Following the trend of most women graduates at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, all of the university-educated women went on to teach before they left for mission work in India. There were limited occupational opportunities for women

⁵⁶ N. Burgess, "Salmond, Sarah and family", J. Thomson, (ed.), *Southern People – A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, (Dunedin, Longacre Press and Dunedin City Council, 1998), p.439 and J. A. Salmond, "Salmond, Sarah, 1864-1956, S2" in C. Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), pp.439-440

⁵⁷ Fry, p.29

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.27

⁵⁹ Page, p.99

⁶⁰ Beatrice Mary Harband, BA; Amy Jane Harband, BA; Jessie Winifred Inglis, MA Hons.; Mary Salmond, MA; Sister Rose Mildred Davey MA.

in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century⁶¹ and teaching was considered a suitable occupation for young women who had completed an arts degree because it could combine their education and 'feminine' qualities⁶² and provided the women with status in their communities.⁶³ Teaching was also a way of passing on these newly gained educational opportunities to another generation of girls and by teaching girls they were not competing for jobs with men.⁶⁴ Mary Salmond trained as a teacher at the Dunedin Training College before spending eight years as the Infant Mistress at East Gore School in Southland.⁶⁵ Rose Mildred Davey, who had a Masters degree in English and Latin, had nine years experience teaching in both public and private schools before she decided to become a deaconess and then a missionary in India. Amy Jane Harband, who completed a Bachelor of Arts at Canterbury University in 1892, worked as a teacher in Ashburton and West Christchurch for the duration of her study and later taught at a primary school in East Christchurch. After Jessie Winifred Inglis achieved her MA Hons in French and English in 1895 from the University of Canterbury she worked as a teacher and was Headmistress of Mrs Cracroft Wilson's School for Girls for three years. Sister Amy Evans, while not having a university education had formally trained as a teacher and worked in public schools until she decided to train as a deaconess. Rosalie Macgeorge had also trained and worked as a teacher before going to India with the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society.⁶⁶ It is clear that the women who proceeded to undertake missionary work had been able to take advantage of the opening educational

⁶¹ Coney, p.208

⁶² Ibid., p.206

⁶³ Ibid., p.208

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.206

⁶⁵ Mary Salmond to Professor Hewitson, January 7th 1915, Letter 12, Punjab Mission – Staff files – Miss Salmond 1915 to 1921, GA0149 (PCANZ)

and academic opportunities for women at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries. Other women in the group undertook further practical training specific to a career as a teacher, nurse or deaconess.

Three of the New Zealand missionary women had trained and worked as nurses in New Zealand.⁶⁷ Emma Beckingsale supplemented her nursing training with a course in midwifery in Edinburgh. Professional nursing was still in its infancy during the decades around the turn of the century. New Zealand's first formal training course for nurses was established in Auckland in 1888 and community nursing was founded in 1896 in Christchurch with the Nurse Maude District Nursing Scheme.⁶⁸ While professional nursing was still a young occupation and there was some opposition to women working in the hospital environment, this was changing and by the first decades of the twentieth century it was seen as a respectable career for a single middle class woman. After she had been accepted as a missionary Miss Bacon also undertook "specialist medical studies" with the intention of enhancing her "usefulness on the mission field".⁶⁹ Isobel Milne undertook nursing studies with the ambition to ultimately enter foreign missionary work. In a letter regarding her nursing training to Mr Hewitson of the FMC she asserted that:

⁶⁶ M. McClure, *Rosalie MacGeorge – Pioneer Missionary*, (Auckland, New Zealand Baptist Historical Society, 1989), p.3

⁶⁷ Elise Browne, *Elise Browne 1914 – 1991 Reminiscences of Nursing Career in India – 1918 – [ca.1923]*, MS Copy Micro 228 (ATL); Emma Beckingsale, "Obituary – Miss E. Beckingsale", *The Evening Star*, April 6th 1955, p.2; Isobel Milne, "Appendix V – Foreign Missions Report – Report of Indian Mission", *PGA – Christchurch*, December 1913, p.100, D. Riddle, *Isobel Riddle nee Milne 1885 – 1964*, p.6 (RPP)

⁶⁸ Coney, p.88

⁶⁹ "Our Missionaries", *The New Zealand Baptist*, Oct 1890, p.154

“India has always been my aim, but I am quite prepared to go to any field where a nurse is most needed.”⁷⁰

Three women had worked as deaconesses in New Zealand before their appointments to India. The deaconess movement had originated in Europe in the 1860s, and was another avenue for the feminisation of mission and the general opening up of opportunities for women to work in a professional capacity within the churches. While New Zealand missionary women represented the feminisation of the foreign mission field, the introduction of deaconesses to New Zealand was the feminisation of home missionary activity. The first deaconess Sister Jane Blakely started work for the Methodists in Auckland in 1890⁷¹ and by 1924 more than eighty-nine women had been trained.⁷² The traditional role of women in the church communities was as a voluntary worker supporting the more formal work of male church workers through fundraising and participation in temperance societies, prayer meetings or sewing circles. Women also accounted for large numbers of voluntary workers acting as teachers of Sunday Schools and Bible Classes.⁷³

The deaconess movement was an extension of this voluntary work on a more professional basis. Deaconess work that involved visiting and helping low-income families was an expansion of women's traditional position as nurturers and protectors of the private sphere, centred on the domestic realm of the family, motherhood and household.

⁷⁰ Isobel Milne to Mr Hewitson, September 5th 1910, Punjab Mission – Staff Files – Miss I. Milne (Mrs Riddle) 1908 to 1941, GA0149 (PCANZ)

⁷¹ Piercy, p.11

⁷² Ibid., p.32

management. Deaconesses mediated between this private sphere and public life. Through deaconesses, the institution of the family and individual woman's household management was opened to public and professional scrutiny and was also incorporated into church systems and hierarchies. Consequently deaconess work was work on behalf of women and children and tailored to their needs. The deaconess movement parallels the feminisation of mission in that it enabled women to continue work associated with the domestic scene with women and children, and yet escape domesticity themselves to enter and work in the public realm and obtain a "public role within their communities".⁷⁴ Movement between work as a foreign missionary and as a deaconess was not uncommon. Three women missionaries who worked in India had undergone training and worked as deaconesses in New Zealand before they chose in the early years of the twentieth century to continue their work in India. Sister Amy Evans and Sister Rose Mildred Davey both worked as deaconesses in Dunedin before undertaking mission work in Madras with the UFCS and in association with the NZPC Sister Lillian H. Lang worked in Wellington⁷⁵ until she headed to India in 1905⁷⁶ with the ECS to work at Poona.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., p.9

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.4

⁷⁵ Mr Hewitson to Mr Stevenson, January 27th 1906, Foreign Missions Committee – Convenor's and Foreign Mission Secretary Outwards Letter File, January 1907 to December 1907, GA0001 (PCANZ)

⁷⁶ W. Stevenson to Rev. W. Hewitson, December 13th 1905, MS7935 – 447-48, Letterbooks of convenors and secretaries of the Women's Foreign Mission Committee, 1876 – 1930, Free Church of Scotland, Church of Scotland Records 1848 – 1931 (ATL); William Stevenson to Rev W. Hewitson, May 31st 1906, MS 7936 – 595-96, Letterbooks of convenors and secretaries of the Women's Foreign Mission Committee, 1876 – 1930, Free Church of Scotland, Church of Scotland Records 1848 – 1931 (ATL)

⁷⁷ William Stevenson to Mr Hewitson, December 13th 1905, Foreign Missions Committee – Missions Convenor's Papers Inwards Correspondence, January 1905 to December 1908, GA0001 (PCANZ)

Six of the fourteen women also undertook specific training for missionary work at the PWTI before they left for India. In 1903 the NZPC became the first church in New Zealand to offer formal training opportunities for female church workers, mainly deaconesses and missionaries,⁷⁸ both from the Presbyterian Church as well as other denominations.⁷⁹ The NZPC took over the private institution that Mrs H. H. Driver⁸⁰ had set up in 1898 to provide some training to missionary women heading to India and China. The course of study at the PWTI, outlined in Chapter One, showed an increasing desire from church officials for more formal training and the professionalism of those single women who worked within the church. According to Karyn-Maree Piercy, the majority of women who attended the PWTI were from middle income families but had not pursued other higher education.⁸¹ The training institute therefore gave them the opportunity to further their educational opportunities and undertake work that would have otherwise been closed to them. Courses at PWTI also provided vocation-specific training to women who had pursued other studies and careers before they left to work as foreign missionaries. Mary Salmond and Rose Mildred Davey, who both held MA degrees and had teaching experience before they decided to devote their lives to missionary service, trained at the PWTI before leaving for India.

Thus, the New Zealand missionary women who undertook foreign missionary work in India were well educated and had previously chosen to work in New Zealand. Hence

⁷⁸ Piercy, p.21

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.27

⁸⁰ The married named of Miss Annie Newcombe, a single women missionary to India from 1887 – 1889 with the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society (Simpson, p.171) and later with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Piercy, p.21).

⁸¹ Piercy, p.30

missionary work was an extension of their ambitions and work in New Zealand. These women were already involved in 'women's work for women' and in reform based work, teaching, nursing and deaconess work. While mission work was an extension of their work in New Zealand, it also presented them with new experiences and challenges and provided opportunities for travel and adventure. In embracing these opportunities, the missionary women challenged gender boundaries in the foreign mission field.

OPPORTUNITIES, ADVENTURE AND TRAVEL

Foreign mission work also offered some women a challenging alternative to the restrictive job opportunities for single women in New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The opportunities and responsibilities that missionary women accepted as part of their work in India challenged gender roles and the belief that missionary work was the domain of men.

India and mission work provided the New Zealand missionary women with greater opportunities and more favourable working conditions than continuing their careers in the more restrictive New Zealand context. Missionary women received pay more equal to that of their male counterparts than did their teaching sisters in New Zealand. In New Zealand female teachers earned significantly less than their male associates. In 1918 female teachers earned on average fifty-six percent less than their male counterparts,⁸² while in 1911, Presbyterian women missionaries in India earned ninety-six percent of a

⁸² Coney, p209

male missionary's salary.⁸³ The Presbyterian Church also paid the same allowances to single men and women missionaries for summer furloughs, travelling and study,⁸⁴ providing greater gender equality in pay than did equivalent careers in New Zealand.

In India, missionary women were also given the opportunity to accept responsibilities and positions that would have been difficult to achieve in New Zealand. In India, Alice Henderson administered four schools in Madras and was in charge of over four hundred students,⁸⁵ while in New Zealand, only a few women teachers gained the headship of schools.⁸⁶ Emma Beckingsale was provided with the opportunity in India of setting up and running her own medical dispensary. In addition to dealing with large budgets and financial responsibilities, women missionaries were also required to make decisions regarding the administration of the institutions they supervised. Alice Henderson was confronted with the prospect of closure of the industrial school because of debt and the loss of Government 'grants in aid'.⁸⁷ Foreign mission stations did not have the structure to maintain the traditional divisions of labour and women were given opportunities to take on new responsibilities.⁸⁸ In the early years of the New Zealand Baptist and Presbyterian missions in India, missionary women were relied upon to administer mission stations, whereas in the churches of New Zealand, women were restricted from such administrative roles. In 1895 Hopestill Pillow had taken over the running of the New Zealand Baptist Mission station at Brahmanbaria while Mr St Dalmas was on furlough.

⁸³ "Minute No.37 – Salaries", *PGA – Dunedin, November 1911*, p.17

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "Appendix XXI – Foreign Missions Report – Report from Madras by Helen MacGregor", *PGA – Dunedin, November 1906*, pp.200-201

⁸⁶ Coney, p208

⁸⁷ "Appendix VI – Report of the Foreign Missions Committee – Report of Miss Henderson, Madras, July 1, 1906 to June 30 1907", *PGA – Wellington, November 1907*, pp.120-121

She was praised in *The New Zealand Baptist* because she “displayed her business abilities in supervising the native workmen, and attending to the affairs of the Mission.”⁸⁹

Missionary women were also required to undertake public roles as part of their missionary work. The missionary women were required to give public lectures and magic lantern displays in both India and New Zealand. Annie Newcombe confessed to feeling “much fear and trembling,” at the prospect of her tour of New Zealand churches before she left for India in 1887 and the public role that it demanded of her.⁹⁰ Speaking in public was still seen as the role of men in the late nineteenth century but this assumption was gradually being challenged by women in the temperance and suffrage movements. The missionary women, with the protection of the churches’ respectability, were challenging New Zealand’s gender boundaries. Thorne points out that it was considered acceptable for missionary women to overcome their “natural” aversion to such tasks as speaking in public, as part of the missionary women’s duty to their cause.⁹¹

Foreign missionary work also presented the missionary women with the opportunity for travel and adventure. The missionary field was portrayed as being exotic and dangerous. Miss Gainsford expressed her delight at the prospect of returning to India in 1910 after her furlough in New Zealand. Her letter tells of her excitement at being on her way to India again and the prospect of the work before her.⁹² A sense of adventure was a definite

⁸⁸ Huber and Lutkehaus, p.2

⁸⁹ “Death of Miss Pillow”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1895, p.114

⁹⁰ Annie J. P. Newcombe, “Correspondence”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, October 1887, p.146

⁹¹ S. Thorne, “missionary-Imperial Feminism,” M. T. Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus (eds.) *Gendered Missions*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.50

⁹² “Miss Gainsford in Ceylon”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, February 1910, p.34

requirement for women wishing to work in the foreign realms of the empire. In 1910 in a lecture at the World Missionary Conference on the need for young women mission workers, Mrs T.S. Gladding articulated the need to recruit "young educated women" who possessed "daring and enthusiasm" and could handle the challenges that the foreign mission field presented.⁹³

Scheduled tours, summer stays in the hills, travel to and from India and around New Zealand placed the New Zealand missionary women as part of the tradition of women travellers. This included Mary Kingsley and Marianne North, who traversed the British Empire.⁹⁴ Missionaries in India often went on scheduled journeys and long camping tours, with the aim of preaching and running medical clinics in outlying villages beyond the reach of normal access from their mission stations.⁹⁵ In 1893, Hopestill Pillow and Annie Bacon spent several months touring the villages along a river in East Bengal in a boat.⁹⁶ These trips were taken to distant villages which were often difficult to access and where Europeans were not often seen.⁹⁷ Miss Alice Henderson described the difficulty in accessing the remote Mandawali Chuhra community for evangelical work and baptisms during one of their camping tours: "Between floods and mud and frightened women we had an experience....We had travelled part of the way by train because the road was impassable except to the long legged crane family."⁹⁸

⁹³ "World's Missionary Conference – The Appeal of the Mission to Young Women", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (24), August 1910, p.v

⁹⁴ D. Birkett, *Spinsters Abroad – Victorian Lady Explorers*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.ix

⁹⁵ G. A. Oddie, "Missionaries as Social Commentators: The Indian Case", in R. A. Bicker and R. Seton, (ed.), *Missionary Encounters – Sources and Issues*, (Richmond, Cuzon Press, 1996), pp.198 - 9

⁹⁶ "N.Z.B.M.S", *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1893, p.74

⁹⁷ Oddie, 1996, pp.198 - 9

Missionaries undertook holidays in the Himalayan foothills to escape the Indian summer and also undertook trips to visit tourist sites and attend missionary conferences and meetings. Alice Henderson travelled fifty miles from Madras to Conjeveram to see the famous temples⁹⁹ and in 1896 Emma Beckingsale visited Darjeeling, giving her the opportunity to visit and write her observations of a Buddhist Temple and a tea-making factory.¹⁰⁰

Travelling New Zealand missionary women were demonstrating 'masculine' qualities of courage and daring that they could only safely show in the context of a foreign and 'heathen' country distanced from the gendered expectations of home.¹⁰¹ The perception that these actions compromised their feminine identity is demonstrated by the response of Mrs St Dalmas on meeting Rosalie Macgeorge: "I had no idea that you were Miss Macgeorge. I had pictured a big-boned, broad, masculine women of about forty, with immensely long arms and a weary tread and deep-toned voice."¹⁰² Their travel also separated missionary women from other women at home in New Zealand, because few in their social position at home would have been able to undertake such expensive and extensive overseas travel. The representations in missionary and other literature of the places and cultures of the foreign mission fields as exotic no doubt also attracted women to the missionary service. The character and significance of these portrayals of 'otherness' will be investigated in subsequent chapters.

⁹⁸ D. Riddle, *Isobel Riddle nee Milne 1885 – 1964*, p.14 (RPP)

⁹⁹ Helen MacGregor, "A Talk on Temples", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, April 1907, p.ii

¹⁰⁰ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, No title [Darjeeling] n.d.[c.1896] (CBC)

¹⁰¹ Birkett, p.193

¹⁰² "Extracts from Miss Macgeorge's Diary", *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 1891, p.37

CHAPTER THREE

AGENTS OF REFORM:

EVANGELICAL AND FEMINIST MOTIVATIONS

In addition to being exemplars of feminist reform, taking advantage of the new opportunities in female education, undertaking foreign travel and working as single women in previously male spheres of activity, New Zealand missionary women were also agents of reform. Feminist reform of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was bound up intimately with Christian ideals of reform and salvation. These connected ideologies were powerful motivating factors in the decision of late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand women to become missionaries in India. Feminist campaigns at the turn of the century were essentially campaigns concerned with social reform, especially issues that pertained to women, such as family and morality. As such, feminist ideology based on improving the position of women in society, which would in turn improve society itself, underpinned the missionary project's aim of saving souls for Christ. Feminist concern for the status of women could, through missionary work, also encompass the welfare and reform of 'heathen' women. For pre-WWI missionary women these two sets of beliefs, feminist concern for women, and the evangelical desire to save souls were interconnected and inseparable. Not all missionary women were ardent feminists arguing for total gender equality. However, evidence strongly suggests that feminist and evangelical ideas were both influential in motivating women to undertake mission work and also sustained and justified their work once in India.

The era this thesis covers, the later decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, experienced waves of revivalist movements¹ that built upon and extended the ideas and beliefs of the later eighteenth century Evangelical Revolution. While the Evangelical Revolution enabled and promoted the establishment of the British foreign missionary movement in the 1790s, the revivals of a century later coincided with the feminisation of this foreign missionary movement. The theology of these evangelical revivals made it easier for women to engage in work in the public sphere as reformers and missionaries. While evangelicalism touched all Protestant denominations in the nineteenth century, its impact and appeal varied. It was not a coherent and constant movement but a fractured and often spontaneous series of movements and although its characteristics changed, central tenets remained that influenced the style and ideology of the foreign missionary movement and the feminisation of that missionary endeavour.

Evangelicalism was centred on the principles of salvation by faith alone and upheld the Bible as the sole authority and interpretation of what that faith should be.² It focused on the individual developing and maintaining an "intimate, even intense, personal relationship with Jesus Christ".³ The search for such a relationship was known as 'holiness' and required a more emotional rather than a considered and rational approach to faith and religion. Yvonne Robertson argues that this more intimate form of religious expression was more accessible and appealing to women and attracted them into the

¹ Y. M. Robertson, *"Girdle Round the Earth": New Zealand Presbyterian Women's Ideal of Universal Sisterhood, 1870-1910*, (Auckland, Presbyterian Historical Society, 1993), p.12

² S. Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia – Spirit, Word and World*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1996), p.vii

³ Ibid.

movement.⁴ Emotional spirituality is clearly evident in the rhetoric the missionary women use to describe their work. J. T. Paul in an article in *The Christian Outlook* described how the missionaries in India had, “hearts burning with Divine enthusiasm”,⁵ and a potential missionary Miss Jamieson described mission work as her “heart’s desire”.⁶

The process of conversion was extremely important to this evangelical theology, and was seen as essential to the identity of a true believer and evidence of their faith. Conversion was seen often after a deep and emotional inner search as an awakening to the truth of the Bible as God’s word and evidence of his divine plan. The New Zealand missionary women have left little evidence of their personal beliefs and conversion experiences. However, Mary Salmond in a letter to Professor Hewitson convenor of the FMC for the Presbyterian Church expressing her interest in mission, refers to an awakening at a bible class conference in Gore in 1915 to her need to volunteer for missionary service. Mary mentioned also her deep thankfulness for the “power and blessings” resulting from the conference.⁷ The focus on conversion in the Protestant mission theology was providential in nature, with the success of the missionary objectives of converting the ‘heathen’ world seen as inevitable. Despite early set backs and resistance to their work and the lack of actual converts that were gained, the missionary women remained optimistic and assured of their eventual success. Helen MacGregor stated in her report to the Foreign Mission

⁴ Y. M. Robertson, 1993, pp.12-13

⁵ “Poona and Indian Village Mission”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XIV (41), October 12th 1907, p.11

⁶ “Departure of a Lady Missionary for India – Farewell Meeting and Presentation”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, xv (12), March 21st 1908, p.8

⁷ Letter no.12, To: Professor Hewitson, From: Mary Salmond, Queenstown, January 7th 1915, GAO149, Punjab Mission – Staff files – Miss Salmond 1915-1921 (PCANZ)

Committee for 1906-1907: "Notwithstanding many difficulties & disappointments, ... the atmosphere of the schools [is] hopeful and inspiring".⁸ Helen MacGregor used the biblical metaphor of the sowing of seeds to illustrate this point: "[I]n that little girls' school the seed, which is the word of God is being sown daily. That seed, we know, is living and powerful, and shall spring up and grow till, one day, it shall overthrow the idolatry and superstition of its environment".⁹ Edith Giesen also demonstrated her belief in the inevitable success of the missionary endeavour, affirming the "contest may be long, but the result is certain".¹⁰

The evangelical conversion process required complete surrender to Christ,¹¹ so that the convert accepted "God's sovereignty in their lives".¹² Surrender to Christ required an ultimate belief in God's will and one's own place in his divine plan for the salvation of human kind. However, this theology was not deterministic, instead it was prefaced by the belief in the free will of the individual. Rather than being an oppressive doctrine in which one was bound without agency to God's will, this surrender to Christ was seen by the missionary women as an empowering idea. Alice Henderson writes in reference to her work in India that: "[e]verywhere doors are opening to those ready to enter".¹³ It was up to the individual to respond to the call from God; it was an opportunity to be part of the righteous path. Yvonne Robertson states that through this conversion and surrender to 'God's will' missionary women became "active agents experiencing new energy,

⁸"Appendix VI – Report of the Foreign Mission Committee, Miss MacGregor's Report 1906-1907", *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand – Wellington November 1907*, (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers Company, 1907), p.19

⁹Helen MacGregor, "A Talk on Temples", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, April 1907, p. ii

¹⁰ E. M. H. Giesen, "Some Superstitions of India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, March 1906, p. iii

¹¹ Y. M. Robertson, 1993, p.13

¹² Ibid., p.15

courage, strength, confidence and even authority as a result of their 'closer walk with God' ".¹⁴ Missionary life was about choosing to follow the path as laid out by God.

Missionary women clearly believed that they were responding to a 'call' by God to undertake their vocation of missionary work. Margaret Young in her letter to the United Free Church of Scotland expressing her interest in mission work professed that: "I believe that God has called me to the work".¹⁵ While the missionary women believed they were called to become missionaries, they actively heeded that call. Mary Salmond in her letter expressing her interest in missionary work stated that: "I have learnt that if we are willing God will lead us to where He would have us serve Him".¹⁶ This belief is also evident in *The New Zealand Baptist*, which asked for the prayers of the readers for the women who had heard the "Master's call to foreign service".¹⁷ H. H. Driver, the Secretary of the NZBMS in 1887 in calling for more women missionaries hoped that: "His voice be heard amidst the music of the wing-veiled cherubim asking, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' and may it awaken in some heart the ready reply, 'Here am I, send me!'"¹⁸

To the missionary women everything that happened had a reason in the divine plan. When doubts over her medical fitness were raised, Mary Salmond said in a letter to

¹³ A. E. Henderson, "A Plea for Indian Women", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, No. 16, April 1909, p. viii

¹⁴ Y. M. Robertson, 1993, p.13

¹⁵ Letter, To: Rev Wm. Stevenson, Secretary for the United Free Church Women's Foreign Mission, From: Miss Margaret C. Young, Y.W.C.A. Albert Street Auckland, 25th November 1907, GA0001, Foreign Missions Committee – Missions Convenor's Papers Inwards Correspondence, January 1905 to December 1908 (PCANZ)

¹⁶ Letter No.12, To: Professor Hewitson, From: Mary Salmond, Queenstown, January 7th 1915, GAO149, Punjab Mission – Staff files – Miss Salmond 1915-1921 (PCANZ)

¹⁷ No title, *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1889, p.137

Alexander Don, the Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee, that she prayed that: "God's will may be done in me & I trust implicitly that He will guide, & that to go or stay will be the best as He wills."¹⁹ When Annie Newcombe had to return from India because of poor health the notice in the *New Zealand Baptist* read: "All our friends will be grieved to hear this sad news. We can but bow under His hand Who does all things well, and say "Thy will be done."²⁰ God worked through his agents on earth. For example it was God that delivered the pupils and teachers from cholera at Ramabai's Mukti Mission in 1907 through the work of the mission workers and nurses.²¹ Surrendering to God's will meant that what was needed was provided to the missionaries, from emotional support from friends and supporters at home, to mission boxes and finances. Miss Morton of the Poona and Indian Village Mission was adamant that money received was in answer to a prayer and that the phrase "in the fullness of time God sent" was the promise she had been given in the Bible.²² The theology of surrender to God's will was a reforming theology as the individual became an agent in the quest to establish a Godly society on earth; to reform individuals through conversion and as a result bring about the reform of society at large. Conversion was essentially a reforming idea, implying a rejection of an old life for the acceptance of a new and better life.

These evangelical revivals took different forms, from an emphasis on 'holiness' associated with the Salvation Army and Methodist Churches, to the Gospel Temperance

¹⁸ H. H. Driver, Hon. Sec., No title, *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 1887, p.37

¹⁹ Mary Salmond to Mr Don, June 19th 1915, Letter No.327, GAO149, Punjab Mission – Staff files – Miss Salmond 1915-1921 (PCANZ)

²⁰ "Miss Newcombe's Return", *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1889, p.72

²¹ "Departure of a Lady Missionary for India – Farewell Meeting and Presentation", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, xv (12), March 21st 1908, p.8

Movement found in the temperance societies and many mainstream churches. However, these revivals also cut across denominations and this ecumenicalism seems to have appealed to women as it provided an alternative to the hierarchical and patriarchal traditional structures of the churches.²³ The evangelical revivals of the nineteenth century were influential in both the Baptist and Presbyterian churches in New Zealand, especially among those who supported foreign mission activity.

The New Zealand churches were influenced by the nineteenth century evangelical revivals through the links they maintained with British churches and societies and through the flow of ministers and church personnel in the large-scale migrations from Britain to the settler societies of the nineteenth century. Foreign mission activity in the New Zealand Baptist and Presbyterian Churches shows the level of co-operation and inter-relatedness of the missionary movement within the British Empire and the extent of the spread of evangelical ideas. The impact of evangelical and missionary zeal amongst British Baptists had a strong influence on the New Zealand Baptist community. Ministers to the newly established Baptist congregations of New Zealand were largely from the British Isles and often had either spent time as missionaries or saw their move to New Zealand as a mission venture.²⁴ One such immigrant who was influential in raising awareness of foreign missions in New Zealand, especially awareness of the East, was the Rev Charles Carter. Carter had been a missionary in Ceylon for twenty-eight years under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS). He arrived in New Zealand in

²² Annie, J. P. Driver, "Miss Morton's Work in India", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (6), March 5th 1904, p.15

²³ Y. M. Robertson, 1993, p.12

1882 and, finally settled in Caversham, Dunedin.²⁵ In 1883 there were also visits to New Zealand by ministers with prestigious connections to the English Baptist Missionary Society. The Rev. William Carey, grandson of the well known Rev. William Carey, probably the most well known original Baptist missionary in India,²⁶ came to New Zealand to visit his brother while waiting for a post to become vacant with the BMS in India.²⁷ His brother in New Zealand was also a Baptist minister. In that same year, there was also a tour by the Rev. and Mrs C.C. Brown who had both served in India, where Mrs Brown had worked as a *zenana* missionary.²⁸

Disagreements and tensions in the Scottish Church culminated in 1843 with the more evangelical members of the clergy seceding from the Established Church and forming the Free Church of Scotland, an event which became known as the Disruption.²⁹ The Disruption had a profound impact on the course of Presbyterianism in New Zealand. All of the Church of Scotland's missionaries and two-fifths of its ministers left their manse and livelihoods in the Disruption.³⁰ In 1843 there was no established Presbyterian church in New Zealand to undergo division³¹ but as Presbyterian congregations formed in the settlements of New Zealand their ministers were sought almost exclusively from the

²⁴ E. P. Y. Simpson, "A History of the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society 1885-1947", (MA (Arts), University of New Zealand, 1948), p.21

²⁵ Ibid., p.21

²⁶ D. A. Davidson, "The New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society in India 1890-1974", (MA (Hist), University of Canterbury, 1974), p.2

²⁷ Simpson, 1948, p.35

²⁸ Ibid., p.36

²⁹ J. R. Elder, *The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840-1940*, (Presbyterian Bookroom, Christchurch, [1940]), pp.9-10

³⁰ P. Matheson, "1840 – 1870 The Settler Church", D. McEldowney, (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa 1840-1990*, (Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Wellington, 1990), p.15

³¹ S. J. Brown and M. Fry, (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption*, (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1993), p.136

UFCS giving the NZPC a profoundly evangelical tone.³² Evangelical revivals and evangelical ideas were thus able to influence the church communities through the movement of evangelical clergy from Britain to New Zealand. Evangelical ideas that were influencing Protestant churches around the world during the late nineteenth century would therefore have been accessible and familiar to the New Zealand missionary women.

An undeniable fact about these missionary women's sense of identity and their motivations for undertaking missionary work, was their deep religious belief. One of the most important qualities required in a missionary woman was her commitment to her church and to the theologies and ideologies of mission. Sir Alexander MacKenzie of the CEZMS stated that "Christian zeal" was essential in the ideal female candidate for mission.³³ Brooke Whitelaw argues that religious character was a fundamental criterion of assessment for New Zealand Presbyterian women applying to become foreign missionaries.³⁴ Whitelaw's research also shows that the women who applied for missionary service "grew up in and around the Church as a social as well as a religious institution".³⁵ Isobel Milne spent her early life at the New Zealand Presbyterian mission station at Nguna, in the New Hebrides, where her parents were missionaries. At six she was sent to Dunedin for formal education where she lived with the Bannermans, a devout Presbyterian family who were eminently involved in the missionary movement. At

³² Elder, p.10

³³ "Sir Alexander MacKenzie on Indian Missions", in *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, vi (24), July 15th 1899, p.25

³⁴ B. E. Whitelaw, "A Message from the Memshaibs: New Zealand Presbyterian Women Missionaries in the Punjab, 1910-1940", (MA thesis, University of Otago, July 2001), p.40

³⁵ Ibid., p.41

eighteen she returned to Nguna and assisted with teaching at the mission station.³⁶ Helen MacGregor's father was the founding minister at Columba Church in Oamaru and had been a Professor of Divinity at New College in Edinburgh before migrating to New Zealand.³⁷ Not all of the women however had such prestigious connections to the church. Instead, most women simply had a lasting connection with the church and involvement in church work such as teaching Bible Classes. Mary Kennedy for example, who went to Kalimpong in Northern India with the Church of Scotland, was a Sunday school teacher at Chalmers Presbyterian Church³⁸ and Mary Salmond was involved in the Bible Class movement.³⁹ Hopestill Pillow was also active in her church, the Oxford Street Baptist Church in Christchurch, as a Sunday School teacher and as a member of the choir.⁴⁰ A central factor therefore in the missionary women's attempts at reforming India through conversion was the missionary women's own religious associations coupled with strong belief in God's 'calling' to undertake missionary work.

The figure of Christ was central to the evangelical movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A change towards a more feminine construction of Christ during the nineteenth century provided the New Zealand missionary women with a role model for their identity as rescuers of Indian women. The Evangelical Revolution of the eighteenth century was a reaction against the Reformation and Calvinist ideas of predestination.

³⁶ D. Riddle, *Isobel Riddle nee Milne 1885 – 1964*, pp.1 and 4 (RPP)

³⁷ Helen MacGregor, I. W. Fraser, *Register of Ministers 1840 – 1989*, (Lower Hutt, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.448

³⁸ "Departure of a Lady Missionary for India – Farewell Meeting and Presentation", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, xv (12), March 21st 1908, p.8

³⁹ Mary Salmond to Professor Hewitson, January 7th 1915, Letter no.12, GAO149, Punjab Mission – Staff files – Miss Salmond 1915-192,1 (PCANZ)

⁴⁰ "Missionary Valedictory Meeting in Christchurch – Farewell to Miss H. H. Pillow", *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1889, p.170

Instead the focus became the figure of Christ as a means of salvation for repentant individuals.⁴¹ The Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century strengthened the centrality of Christ by portraying Jesus as a romantic figure and emphasising his absolute power.⁴² The evangelical revivals continued this theme. The appeal to women of evangelicalism, with its emphasis on the figure of Jesus, was heightened by these changing representations of Christ. Barbara Welter has explored these changing representations of Christ and their appeal to women in the evangelical movements of the nineteenth century. She argues that in the American evangelical movement of the first half of the nineteenth century there was a 'feminisation' of religion which was reflected in the new image of Christ as a representation of feminine virtues such as "meekness and humility."⁴³ This new 'femaleness' of both God and the figure of Christ coincided with a demographic change in the composition of church congregations, which became overwhelmingly female.⁴⁴ Yvonne Robertson has noted the same trend in the New Zealand Presbyterian Church in the decades at the turn of the twentieth century. She sees the church's rhetoric of the time as constructing an image of Jesus and God according to the feminine ideal of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "loving, nurturing, [and] self-sacrificing".⁴⁵ Consequently in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new feminine construction of the figure of Christ both attracted women to evangelism and strengthened women's new roles in the church as missionaries by focusing on the qualities of service and self-sacrifice.

⁴¹ A. Copley, *Religions in Conflict – Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late-Colonial India*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997), p.8

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ B. Welter, *Dimity Convictions – The American Women in the Nineteenth Century*, (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1976), p.88

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Robertson, 1993, p.2

Evangelical ideas challenged believers to follow in Christ's footsteps and missionary women were presented in missionary literature as following a life inspired by Christ. In *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, women missionaries in Madras were thanked for their "self-sacrificing labours".⁴⁶ The nurturing attributes of the missionary women were also highlighted. Even though the missionaries were single, their Indian students and patients were presented as their dependants. A photo of Alice Henderson and some Indian children is entitled "Miss Henderson and some of her family".⁴⁷ These qualities of femininity were a continuation of the Victorian ideal of womanhood in which a woman was represented as the 'angel of the house'. This ideal of womanhood celebrated women as the morally superior sex, an identification that highlighted the differences between male and female rather than focusing on their equality before God. Women according to this ideal were presented as 'helpmeets' to their husbands and relegated to the private domain of domestic space. By utilising this rhetoric, missionary women thus supported and reinforced an inherently conservative ideology.

However, the evangelical discourse, by encouraging women to be Christ-like generated a "gender paradox".⁴⁸ By employing this ideology women were able to forge for themselves a more significant role in the religious public sphere by claiming their superior moral position to be necessary for the rejuvenation and reform of society. Women could also claim this space for themselves as it did not challenge male roles, relying instead on the different nature of women and men. This ideology also justified

⁴⁶ "Zenana Mission in Madras", in *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (1), July 1st 1893, p.18

⁴⁷ Photo, "Miss Henderson and some of her family", P-A13, p.39, no.139 (PCANZ)

women's place in the public sphere while retaining their feminine identity. While the feminisation of mission allowed women as exemplars of feminist reform to challenge gender roles, paradoxically it was the traditional view of women's nature that was seen as fitting them for this task. While the missionary woman represented a 'New woman' who was educated, undertook paid work outside of the home and in a foreign country, it was the conservative and traditional view of women's nature as nurturing and self sacrificing which justified their move into the public sphere, both in the religious world and wider society, and became the centre of the ideology of 'women's work for women'.

The concept of 'women's work for women' was also influenced by feminist ideas of reform, which contributed to the identity of New Zealand missionary women as reformers and provided both motive and justification for their work in India. Feminist ideas of reform were not static and were influenced by other reform movements of the time. Religious ideas of salvation and imperial concepts of duty and civilisation all intermingled. This created a unique ideology that supported and justified 'women's work for women' in India. This following section will look at how these missionary women were both religious and feminist in outlook and how these two ideologies were closely linked in the New Zealand context.

There has been a tendency in the scholarship to distinguish between the feminisation of mission and the religious sphere and the feminist movements of these decades; a belief

⁴⁸ Robertson, 1993, p.3

that these two movements attracted "different 'kinds' of women".⁴⁹ Instead Susan Thorne argues that the work of missionary women and the elements of political and social feminism were "differing expressions of similar impulses...and that women moved from one to the other application with relative ease."⁵⁰ Thorne cites the example of the evangelical women, who in Britain in the 1870s, played important roles in the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act.⁵¹ In New Zealand too, evangelical women played a significant role in opposing New Zealand's Contagious Diseases Act of 1869. Mary Steadman Aldis a prominent campaigner against the act was also a committed Protestant.⁵² The New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union (NZWCTU) was also a leading proponent for the repeal of the act as it "interferes with the rights and liberties of women...[and] is a disgrace to a community calling itself Christian."⁵³ Presbyterian women in New Zealand, as Robertson has illustrated, were active in the campaign to gain access to higher education for women, especially in Dunedin. Catherine Fulton, who was the first President of the Dunedin branch of the NZWCTU and later national president was connected to the Presbyterian Church⁵⁴ and later baptised in the Hanover Street Baptist Church,⁵⁵ which had a strong missionary emphasis under its minister Rev. Alfred North.⁵⁶ The NZWCTU is an excellent example of how Christianity and feminist reforms of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were so closely

⁴⁹S. Thorne, "Missionary Imperial Feminism" in M. Taylor Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered Missions – Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999, rep2002), p.51

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² S. Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), p.123

⁵³ Annie Schnackenberg, quoted in S. Coney, p.122.

⁵⁴ Robertson, 1993, p.4

⁵⁵ J. A. McKay, "The Tie that Binds": Christianity in the New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885-1900", (BAHons. Dissertation (Hist), University of Otago, 1995), p.15

⁵⁶ Simpson, 1948, p.37

linked as to be inseparable. Jolene McKay in her dissertation has argued convincingly that Christianity was the most important motivating force for the majority of the women in the NZWCTU.⁵⁷ According to the definition of feminism noted in the introduction above, the NZWCTU was undoubtedly a feminist organisation since it attempted to change the position of women in society through social reform.⁵⁸ Utilising the view of women as moral guardians of society the NZWCTU also saw women as agents of reform.⁵⁹ While some members of the NZWCTU supported a more radical political feminist agenda, the majority of the membership was more conservative in its views, believing the Union should be more concerned with the spiritual and social aspects. The Union was divided into different departments, each in charge of a specific area of work.⁶⁰ There was consistently a department dedicated to Evangelical work and, from 1892, there was also a department dedicated to missionary work.⁶¹ Religious and feminist ideas of reform were thus clearly intertwined in New Zealand at this time.

The direct influence of evangelical and feminist ideas of reform on the missionary women is hard to ascertain as the sources do not provide much information on the lives and thoughts of the missionary women prior to their work in India. Women who participated in the feminist reform movements in New Zealand were, like the missionary women, mostly middle class and were presumably influenced and motivated by similar ideas. While one cannot make generalisations about the beliefs of all the missionary

⁵⁷ McKay, 1995, p.

⁵⁸ R. Dalziel, "Political Organisations", in A. Else (ed.), *Women Together*, (Wellington, Historical Branch Department of Internal Affairs, Daphne Brasell Associates, 1993), p.56. R Dalziel, "New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885-", in A. Else (ed.), *Women Together*, (Wellington, Historical Branch Department of Internal Affairs, Daphne Brasell Associates, 1993), p.72

⁵⁹ Dalziel, 1993, p.56

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.72

women, it is evident that a significant number had links to the feminist reform campaigns or were sympathetic to their aims. Alice Henderson for example came from a family of prominent feminists. Her sister Stella was one of the first women in New Zealand to pass a degree in Law and she was a founding member of the National Council of Women (NCW) in 1896. Another sister, Christina, was an active member of both the WCTU and the NCW and served as secretary and president of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society. Their other sister Elizabeth was later to become New Zealand's first female Member of Parliament.⁶² Unfortunately there are no existing membership records for the NZWCTU, so it is impossible to say how many others had connections to this organisation.

However, it is possible by looking at the transcript of the 1893 Suffrage Petition to judge levels of sympathy among the missionary women towards the cause of women's suffrage, whether for reasons of equal rights or home protection. The 1893 suffrage petition included the signatures of 31,872⁶³ women, around ten percent of the female population.⁶⁴ Given this figure, a significant number of the missionary women or their female family members signed this suffrage petition. Six of the missionary women were

⁶¹ McKay, 1995, p.66

⁶² P.A. Sargison, "Henderson, Christina Kirk, 1861-1953, H28" and C. Broadbent, "Henderson, Stella May, 1871-1962, H29" in C. Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), pp.208-209

⁶³ Only women were allowed to sign the petition to counter the claim by opponents that women did not actually want the vote. S. Coney, (ed.), *Standing in the Sunshine: A History of New Zealand Women Since They Won the Vote*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), pp.28-29

⁶⁴ There was not a census taken in 1893, but the census in 1891 showed a population of 293,781 females and in 1896 there was 331,945 females. With figures taken from "Table I – Showing the Population of the Colony, according to the census taken on the 5th April 1891", *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the night of the 5th April 1891*, (Wellington, Office of the Registrar General, George Didsbury, 1892), p.1 and "Table I – Showing Population of the Colony according to the Census taken on the 12th April 1896", *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the night of the 12th April 1896*, (Wellington, Office of the Registrar General, John MacKay, 1896), p.1

at this time already in India or not in the country and many of the women that went out later on in the period would have been too young to sign. There are some limitations to the use of the petition as a source. Women's names have had to be deciphered from their signatures and these sometimes only provide the surname and initials and addresses are often no more detailed than a suburb. These factors often make it difficult to determine the identity of a specific woman. Given these restrictions however, it is possible to confidently identify four of the missionary women who signed the petition, Alice Henderson⁶⁵, Emma Beckingsale⁶⁶, Edith Giesen⁶⁷ and Margaret Young.⁶⁸ Mary Salmond's mother Sarah also signed the petition⁶⁹ as did Alice's two sisters Christina and Stella.⁷⁰ It is probable, given the evidence that is available, that another five women also signed the petition⁷¹ and possible that female relatives of five of the missionaries also

⁶⁵ "Alice Henderson – Onslow St. Christchurch", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript, p.203 (ANZDO) and personal communication with Margaret Lovell-Smith

⁶⁶ "E. Beckingsale – Park Street", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript, p.30 (ANZDO) Her fathers entry Stone's Directory confirm that they were the only Beckingsales in Dunedin, *Stone's Dunedin and Suburban Commerical, Municipal and General Directory*, (John Stone, Dunedin, 1885), p.168

⁶⁷ "Edith M. H. Giesen – Feilding", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript, p.164 (ANZDO); "Giesen, Miss Edith H. M.", I. W. Fraser, *Register of Minister 1840 to 1889*, (Lower Hutt, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), 257

⁶⁸ "M. Young – Albert St", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript, p.498 (ANZDO); Miss Margaret C. Young to Rev. William Stevenson, 25th November 1907, GA0001, Foreign Missions Committee, Missions Convenor's Papers Inwards Correspondence January 1905 to December 1908 (PCANZ)

⁶⁹ Mary would have only been six. "S. Salmond – Queenstown", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript: Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office, p.397 and N. Burgess, "Salmond, Sarah and family" in J. Thomson, (ed.), *Southern People – A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, (Dunedin, Longacre Press and Dunedin City Council, 1998), p.439 and J. A. Salmond, "Salmond, Sarah, 1864-1956, S2" in C. Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), pp.439-440

⁷⁰ "Christina R. Henderson – ChCh" and "Stella M. Henderson – Canterbury Collage", *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript: Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office, p.203

⁷¹ *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, Archives New Zealand, Head Office, LE1893/15, transcript: Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office (SPT)

These women have the right initials and in the same city that I think they were in at the time but can't be sure.

signed.⁷² While these figures are not conclusive it is evident that at least some of the New Zealand missionary women were supportive of women's suffrage.

Middle class women in New Zealand at the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth were forging identities for themselves as reformers; social, political and religious. These strands of reform were not mutually exclusive but overlapped and were interdependent. Reform work was clearly a brand of feminism in which many religious women took part and which was influenced by evangelical ideas. Missionary women were therefore part of a wider context of feminist reform, which undoubtedly influenced their motivations and justifications for undertaking missionary work. New Zealand missionary women came from an environment in which woman's place as guardians of the home was being extended into the public sphere, enabling them to act as agents of reform, "guardians of moral health and welfare".⁷³

Mary Kennedy – SPT, p.246

Elise Lilly – SPT, p.264

Annie Evans – SPT, p.137

A. Hall – SPT, p.185

L.Ings – SPT, p.227

⁷² Annie Bacon – SPT, p.17 (Dunedin)

Giesen – SPT, p.164 (Feilding)

Blair – SPT, p.146 (Dunedin – Martha – M)

MacGregor – SPT, p.298 (Sandymount)

Beckingsale – SPT, p.30 (Sarah)

⁷³ R. Dalziel, "The Colonial Helpmeet: Women's Role and the Vote in Nineteenth Century New Zealand", *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 11(2), October 1977, p.113

CHAPTER FOUR

GLOBAL SISTERHOODS AND THE IMAGE OF THE DEGRADED INDIAN WOMAN

New Zealand missionary women who worked in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from a culture of reform and in their work they established an identity for themselves as rescuers. Central to this identity as rescuers was the image of 'universal sisterhood' and the construction of Indian women as victims. Sisterhood was an expression of a complex mix of evangelical Christian, imperial and feminist ideologies. The concept of sisterhood offers an excellent case study for analysing the way in which these three strands converge in the discourse of missionary reform. The convergence of feminist, evangelical and imperial ideals in the concept of sisterhood provides a lens through which to examine the way in which missionary women constructed themselves as rescuers of Indian women. The missionary women believed both in their own exalted emancipated position and seemingly paradoxically in their unity with a degraded Indian womanhood. Close analysis reveals however, that these two beliefs are in fact interdependent.

Like 'feminism', 'sisterhood' is a complex and dynamic term. Missionary ideas of sisterhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drew upon both the evangelical and feminist traditions of sisterhood. Christianity has a long tradition of the use of the terms of 'sisterhood' and 'brotherhood', and this continued in the evangelical rhetoric of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the evangelical tradition

these terms represented the theology of equality before God¹ and the belief in the 'family' of Christianity, with God as the 'father'.² This common identity based on faith is evident in Helen MacGregor's reference to a group of Indian Christians as "fellow Christians".³ Nineteenth century feminist ideas of sisterhood referred to a sense of common identity among a group of women, because they were women,⁴ and the belief that they therefore possessed a unique nature.⁵ This chapter will look at the development of the ideas of sisterhood, which the missionary women utilised and which was part of the missionary women's identity as reformers.

Missionary women and their female supporters throughout Britain, America and the settler colonies developed an idea of sisterhood based on their common identity as Christian women. Their idea of sisterhood was based on the evangelical idea of Christianity discussed in the last chapter, as requiring surrender to Christ and a life lived in imitation of Christ's sacrificial love. Through these evangelical ideas women were presented with a vocation, the moral guardianship and reform of society. Women were to model their lives on Christ's total submission to both God and humanity.⁶ Women believed it was their duty to work together and to use their God given nature for "one common salvation".⁷ A strong sense of international sisterhood developed in the

¹ Y. M. Robertson, *"Girdle Round the Earth": New Zealand Presbyterian Women's Ideal of Universal Sisterhood, 1870-1910*, (Auckland, Presbyterian Historical Society, 1993), p.8

² H. MacGregor, "Letters from Miss MacGregor, Madras, India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (13), October 1908, p.ii

³ Ibid, p.ii

⁴ A. C. Wanhalla, "Gender, Race and Colonial Identity: Women and Eugenics in New Zealand, 1918 – 1939", (MA. (Hist), University of Canterbury, 2001), p.20

⁵ L. J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1997), p.83

⁶ Robertson, 1993, p.13

⁷ Ibid.

missionary movement, accompanied by the ideology of 'women's work for women', which was both created by and justified the continued feminisation of mission. The rhetoric of sisterhood was employed to both garner support for the missionary cause from women supporters and to argue for a uniquely feminine sphere of work.⁸

The concept of 'universal sisterhood' linked New Zealand missionary women and female mission supporters with the international networks of women's missionary work. Yvonne Robertson has demonstrated how the ideal of 'universal sisterhood' is evident in the rhetoric of the women of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Women's missionary societies were the prominent women's organisations in Britain, Australia, United States and Canada and there was substantial communication between international women's missionary societies and an understanding that they were working towards a common goal. In 1895 the interdenominational New Zealand Women's Missionary (Zenana) Society (WMS) mentioned the missionary covenant which had been adopted by women's missionary societies overseas, and the prospect that they should also join.⁹

That international links between women's missionary societies were considered important by the New Zealand women is evident in the separate Foreign Correspondent's Report given in the Report of the PWMU to the General Assembly. Missionary women and their supporters saw these connections as part of maintaining this international sisterhood and this is expressed in the missionary literature. In 1910, the Foreign

⁸ J. Haggis, "Ironies of Emancipation: Changing Configurations of 'Women's Work' in the 'Mission of Sisterhood' to Indian Women", *Feminist Review*, (65), Summer 2000, p.109

Correspondent's report mentioned messages of greetings between the NZPWMU and the UFCS. Further, the report mentions a "sisterly message"¹⁰ from women's missionary societies in Toronto and the report states that the Harvest Field is "regularly forwarded to sister Unions outside of the Dominion."¹¹ The writings of the Baptist women also suggest a sense of international sisterhood. When the New Zealander, Miss Newcombe was forced to return home because of bad health, Miss Pearse of the Australian Baptist Missionary Union travelled with her from Furreedpore to nurse her "sick sister".¹²

As Robertson points out, the women themselves were excited by the prospect of being part of such a large and international movement, adding an international element to their personal identity. Robertson has shown how the women of the home missionary societies believed the missionary women in India represented the hopes and aims of the women they had left behind and the belief that they all stood together on the "frontier of history."¹³ Mrs. Longhurst of the Madras Zenana Mission (MZM) on a trip to promote Indian mission work to New Zealand women in the early 1890s connected with these beliefs when she told her audience that they "have cause to be thankful that you in New Zealand have been permitted to take a part in this great work".¹⁴

⁹ "Zenana Mission", *The Christian Outlook*, 2 (28), August 10th, 1885, p.331

¹⁰ J. Bannerman, "Foreign Correspondent's Report", in "Appendix VIIA – Report of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of New Zealand", in *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand – Held at Auckland, November 9th 1910*, (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers Company, 1910), p.128 (PCANZ)

¹¹ Bannerman, in *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand – Held at Auckland, November 9th 1910*, p.129 (PCANZ)

¹² "Miss Newcombe's Return", *The New Zealand Baptist*, June 1889, p.88

¹³ Robertson, 1993, p.17

¹⁴ "Zenana Mission", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (4), October 2nd 1893, p.73

This feminist ethos of 'sisterhood' that developed in the women's movements in the West at this time, was also incorporated into female missionary discourse. The missionary women believed in a fundamentally pure form¹⁵ of woman, an ideal of femininity, which believed woman's inherent nature was good and virtuous and that this ideal should also apply to their Indian 'sisters' as well. Alice Henderson wrote that the women in India had once enjoyed a higher status in society and that their decline from this position was symbolic of the deterioration of Indian religion and civilisation as a whole.¹⁶ To the missionary women Christianity and its civilising influence provided the hope of restoring Indian women to their 'truly' feminine position. To the missionary women and their supporters it was imperative therefore, that New Zealand women took up the 'plight' of Indian women, either as missionaries or as supporters of mission, to rescue their fellow females from degradation and to save them from the fates that their heathen religion proscribed.

British feminism of the period was convinced of and committed to an ideal of 'global sisterhood'. Feminists of the time were influenced by liberal and democratic ideals of the age¹⁷ and believed that the women's movement should be egalitarian and international in its ideologies.¹⁸ Feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain believed that women, despite differences in their race or class, held a common identity as figures of male oppression, and that women should work collectively to challenge this

¹⁵ A. Henderson, "India - Religion - continued", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (21), February 1910, p.iv

¹⁶ A. Henderson, "The Place of Women in the Hindu Religion", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iii,

¹⁷ Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1987), p.xiii

¹⁸ A. Burton, "The Feminist Quest for Identity: British Imperial Suffragism and "Global Sisterhood", 1900-1915", *Journal of Women's History*, 3 (2), Fall 1991, p.49

oppression.¹⁹ The ideal of a universal sisterhood is evident in the claim by Josephine Butler during her campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act that “the womenhood of the world is *solidaire*”.²⁰

New Zealand missionary literature also demonstrates the feminist concept of sisterhood. An article in *The Outlook* by a member of the Student’s Missionary Movement illustrates the concept of international sisterhood. Una Saunders claims that: “Indian students may often be more like ‘schoolgirls’ than students, but hearts are the same in England and India”.²¹ This quote also highlights the paradox of racial hierarchy present in both the missionary imperial feminist ideology and the concepts of global sisterhood. While the concept of global sisterhood united the women’s missionary movement in Britain, America and the settler colonies, when it was applied beyond these boundaries, it was a decidedly unequal sisterhood.

While imperial feminist ideology advocated a global sisterhood based on female unity in opposition to systems of patriarchy it was also an unequal sisterhood. Antoinette Burton has convincingly argued for the imperial nature of British feminism, especially in the early twentieth century.²² British women, and women in British settler societies, were convinced of the inherent superiority of the British race and culture and therefore believed they had a responsibility to their “colonial sisters” to civilise and emancipate

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Una Saunders, “The Influence of India’s Educated Women”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (6), March 5th 1904

²² Burton, 1991, A. Burton, “From Child Bride to “Hindoo Lady”: Rukhmabai and the Debate on Sexual Respectability in Imperial Britain”, *American Historical Review*, 103(4), October 1998, pp.46-81

them according to the ideals of freedom and accepted norms of femininity that the metropole determined.²³ This imperial feminist ideology thus advocated the responsibility of British and British settler women within the empire towards their 'sisters' in India.

Burton has outlined how middle class British feminists felt a sense of responsibility for their 'sisters' in India and were motivated by feelings of sympathy and protectiveness. New Zealand missionary literature suggests that this sense of responsibility to their Indian 'sisters' was also a motivation for the New Zealand women missionaries. Alice Henderson professes in *The Christian Outlook* that "[m]y heart has been so full of sorrow for these poor women and girls since I came that there has been no room for any other feeling".²⁴ This sense of responsibility is tied to the imperial idea that the conqueror has a duty to protect and civilise the colonies under British rule. When Helen MacGregor writes that India has been "in God's providence brought under the control of our own British Government, and are thus readily accessible to English speaking people",²⁵ Helen identifies the British Government as her government and demonstrates her belief that Britain's rule in India is divinely ordained. She continues on to argue that God has provided this opportunity so that India may: "Turn from Darkness to Light"²⁶ through the missionary led conversion to Christianity. The sense of responsibility the missionary women and their female supporters felt towards their Indian 'sisters' was based on their

²³ Haggis, 2000, p.109

²⁴ A. E. Henderson, "India – Letter from Miss Henderson", *The Christian Outlook*, 3 (30), January 9th 1897, p.604

²⁵ Helen MacGregor, "Why is India Black?", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XIV (32), August 10th 1907, p.21

²⁶ Ibid.

belief in the freedoms for women offered by Christianity and British civilisation, which for the missionary women were interdependent.

The belief that women were emblematic of a society's liberation and progress was the result of a combination of racial, imperial and evangelical theories. The enlightenment idea that civilisations could be categorised and arranged in an hierarchy of progress became, in the nineteenth century, interchangeable with the concept of racial hierarchies.²⁷ These theories of racial hierarchies identified each culture's ideals of femininity as indicative of their 'progress' and emphasised the importance of women's role in maintaining and improving each 'race'.²⁸ However, the ideals of femininity against which all others were judged was the English model of feminine behaviour. This feminine ideal centred on the exalted position of women as upholders of morality and spirituality.²⁹ As discussed previously, in the later nineteenth century, religion offered New Zealand middle class women a sphere of operation in which they could mediate between the public world, dominated by male occupations of politics and trade, and the private and feminine world of family and home. Religious based women's organisations provided opportunities for women to utilise the unique qualities claimed for females of the period, in particular the attribution of higher standards of morality and to campaign on issues such as temperance which affected social cohesion. By the 1890s there was a

²⁷ R. J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire – Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, (London, Routledge, 1995), pp.34-35 and R. Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914 – A Study of Empire and Expansion*, (London, Macmillan Press, 1993), pp.76-77

²⁸ J. Rowbotham, "'Hear an Indian sister's plea': reporting the work of nineteenth century British female missionaries", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 21 (3), 1998, p.248

²⁹ Ibid.

new group of women in New Zealand who were formally educated at universities, active outside the home and from 1893, able to vote.

Consequently the changing role of women in the West highlighted the restrictions Indian women faced. A greater public role for women and access to higher education and legislative equality defined the progress of Western societies, and their absence in India represented India's backwardness. The occupational opportunities presented in the feminisation of the overseas missionary fields allowed women to carry their new found independence to their 'Indian sisters' whose voices of "helplessness and hopelessness" they believed were calling: "Come over and help us".³⁰

Missionary women in Britain, America and the settler colonies were linked through the concept of universal sisterhood and their belief in their own status as emancipated women. Leslie Flemming's work illustrates American Missionary women's belief in their own exalted status as emancipated women.³¹ This belief is demonstrated by Helen Barrett Montgomery in her book *Western Women in Eastern Lands* published in 1910:

We live in a country where the discussion of "Women's Rights" is ever to the front. We are to study lands where they are just beginning to recognise woman's wrongs – lands where the slogan "Ladies First" is consistently and persistently "Ladies Last." The appeal to the women of England and America was winged by the recital of the intolerable injustices

³⁰ H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*, (Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1906), p.46

³¹ L. A. Flemming, "New Models, New Roles: U.S. Presbyterian Women Missionaries and Social Change in North India 1870 – 1910", L. A. Flemming ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1989), p.40

and oppressions under which the women of the non – Christian lands spent their lives.³²

New Zealand missionary women also believed in their superior emancipatory status. As we have seen in the previous chapter, New Zealand at this time was witnessing significant shifts in the position of women in society. Women were gaining access to higher levels of education and many were forging a place for themselves in work outside the home. In 1893 New Zealand had also become the first self-governing nation to award women the vote. New Zealand was held up by supporters of feminist reform as an example of the possibilities and rewards that the female franchise could bring.³³ Many New Zealand women were undoubtedly proud of this reputation. Christina Henderson, on a visit to her missionary sister Alice, in Madras in 1907, comments on the superior position of women in New Zealand in comparison with India since “avenues open to women in our country are completely closed there”.³⁴

The superior position of women in Britain, America and the settler colonies was claimed by contemporaries as evidence of the superiority of both Anglo British civilisation and the Christian religion. Patricia Grimshaw has outlined how evangelicals in America believed that it was Christianity that raised and sustained American women in their elevated status.³⁵ In Evangelical thought it was only through accepting God’s love that women could be elevated to their rightful position, and through their feminine influence

³² Helen Barrett Montgomery, *Western Women in Eastern Lands – An Outline Study of Fifty years of Women’s Work in Foreign Missions*, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1910), p.45

³³ S. Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), p.34

³⁴ C. Henderson, “With the Mission in Madras”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, no.7, September 1907, p.iii

³⁵ Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Hawaii*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p.xiv

reform the rest of society. Reverend Rutherford Waddell, a prominent Dunedin reformer and mission supporter, credited the figure of Christ with the emancipation of women. He argued that in the time before Christ, women had been: "downtrodden, oppressed, ignorant, forgotten, degraded, dying, slave of man, without life, without will or rights".³⁶ Waddell further argued that God's love and Christ's sacrifice had, in British societies, raised women to a position of esteem and deference.³⁷ The freedoms that New Zealand women missionaries believed they possessed of education, public mobility and suffrage were therefore linked to their identities as Christian women. The link between feminist emancipation and conversion is evident in a quote from *The New Zealand Baptist* in 1886: "And their only hope and only help is Christ; He, He alone can enfranchise and can save them."³⁸

To the missionary women and their supporters the imperial and missionary projects were intertwined. While these two ideologies were not synonymous, neither were there straight lines dividing them. Both ideologies developed and sustained by the British Government in the British Empire and the Protestant Missionaries in Christianity, were exclusive in nature believing in their own inherent superiority.³⁹ Increasingly, in the nineteenth century, the British administration in India focused on political and social reformation as a moral responsibility of imperial rule and directed their attention to the moral

³⁶ Rutherford Waddell, "Christ's Work for Women and Women's Work for Christ", *St Andrew's Church Monthly*, October 8th 1885, pp.2-5 as quoted in Robertson, "Girdle Round the Earth", p.9

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Miss Macgeorge's Departure – The Valedictory Address", *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1886, p.174

³⁹ A. Copley, *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late-Colonial India*, (Dehli, Oxford University Press, 1997), p.12

improvement of colonial subjects.⁴⁰ Helen MacGregor saw the colonial regime as complicit in the mission to civilise and Christianise India through its grants in aid to mission schools and colleges.⁴¹ The missionary endeavour in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not solely about conversion but included projects of Christianisation, such as the promotion of formal teachings of the church together with the cultural mores associated with it, concerning race, gender and class.⁴² As part of this trend to spread British/Christian values through missionary work, New Zealand missionary women sought to impose British concepts of femininity and domesticity upon Indian women. This will be discussed further in chapters five and six. To European missionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, civilisation was represented through race and religion.⁴³ This interdependence between religion and race and the idea that the superiority of one supported and reinforced the other is evident in the New Zealand missionary literature. A Brahmin priest is quoted in *The N. Z. Presbyterian* as speculating: "Where did the English people get their intelligence and energy, and cleverness, and power? It is their Bible that gives it to them."⁴⁴ Hence, New Zealand missionary women and their supporters at home were placed in an elevated position because of their identification with both the British race and with Christianity.

The superior position that British civilisation and Christianity allowed New Zealand women thus justified their identity as rescuers of Indian women. While the concept of

⁴⁰ M. T. Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp.9-10

⁴¹ MacGregor, *The Outlook*, August 10th 1907, p.21

⁴² Huber and Lutkehaus, p.10

⁴³ Ibid., p.3

⁴⁴ "A Brahmin's Testimony", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (4), October 2nd 1893, p.73

global sisterhood tied mission minded women from Britain, America and the settler colonies together, it also created among New Zealand women a sense of responsibility and duty towards Indian women. However, the global sisterhood was not an equal one, instead it highlighted the superior status of missionary women and their supporters and reinforced the idea of the New Zealand missionary women as rescuers of degraded Indian women.

“A PLEA FOR INDIAN WOMEN”,⁴⁵ THE MISSIONARY IDEA OF THE DEGRADED INDIAN WOMAN

Both international missionary rhetoric and imperial feminist literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented the Indian woman as a figure of male and religious oppression. The image of the ‘degraded Indian woman’ outraged the missionary women’s sense of sisterhood and provided a strong motivating factor for missionary women in their work in India. The missionary ‘rhetoric of rescuing’ was centred on the figure of the ‘degraded Indian woman’. As has been discussed above in the section on sisterhood, the missionary women believed in the emancipatory value of Christianity and attached British civilisation. Missionary women believed Indian women were ‘degraded’ because they were prevented from developing a Western model of femininity. This model of femininity included access to Christianity, to the role of wife and mother within a new family ideal and freedom to receive education, albeit an education that was suitable to one’s status and position.

⁴⁵ A. E. Henderson, “A Plea for Indian Women”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (16), April 1909, p.viii

International missionary rhetoric of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century regarded the Indian woman as an oppressed figure. Marina Chawla Singh and Leslie Flemming have both discussed the emphasis in American missionary literature on the use of the "degraded oriental woman figure".⁴⁶ British historians have also demonstrated how emphasis was placed on the image of the degraded Indian woman in writings by British missionary women. Antoinette Burton has explored the idea that nineteenth century British missionary women relied on the image of the 'enslaved' and 'primitive' oriental woman in order to demonstrate and justify their own emancipation.⁴⁷ Jane Haggis' work also focuses on the use by British missionary women of the plight of Indian women and the need to work for their liberation.⁴⁸ New Zealand missionary literature perpetuated this perception of the downtrodden and oppressed Indian woman found in the international missionary literature. The portrayal of Indian women as degraded was not unique to turn of the century missionary literature. Indian women were constructed as victims early in the colonial period. As Lata Mani points out, the debate over sati in the early decades of the nineteenth century, established in the British mind the image of Indian women as victims of religion. The image of the degraded Indian woman justified the British government's prohibition of sati in 1829⁴⁹ by presenting itself as the rescuer of persecuted Indian women.

⁴⁶ M. C. Singh, *Gender, Religion and "Heathen" Lands: American Missionary Women in South Asia (1860s-1940s)*, (New York, Garland, 2000), p.116. L. A. Flemming, 1989, p.40

⁴⁷ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865 – 1915*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p.abstract

⁴⁸ Haggis, p.109

⁴⁹ L. Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*, (Berkley, University of California Press, 1998), p.1

As has been discussed above, Christian women believed their religion was a sphere of spiritual liberation and agency, in which they could develop as women to their full potential. However, Indian women were seen as victims of their religion. In missionary literature great emphasis was placed on religion as the reason for the degraded state of Indian women. The missionaries believed that Indian religions were used to justify practices harmful to the well being and dignity of Indian women, such as child marriage and religious prescriptions concerning the treatment of widows. It is evident that Indian women were seen as victims of religion by the New Zealand missionary women who perpetuated this image in their writings. The *N.Z. Presbyterian* gives an account of a letter between Miss MacGregor and Miss Tawse of Edinburgh in which Miss MacGregor describes the "dark, helpless, and hopeless life which the Hindoo religion seems to prescribe for its women."⁵⁰ While the image of the Indian woman as a victim of religion was not new, having been used in the British colonial arguments against sati, its use in missionary women's literature reinforced its centrality in European perceptions of India.

Indian and Hindu religious customs which received the most criticism from missionary women were child marriages, the treatment of widows, purdah and the institution of temple dancing girls,⁵¹ all of which they saw as exploitation of innocent women and children who were incapable of providing for or protecting themselves. Missionary women believed these customs were sanctioned by religion and forced upon the Indian women. Missionary women believed that Indian women were degraded by a religion that

⁵⁰"Zenana Mission in Madras", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (1), July 1st 1893, p.18

⁵¹ Rev. M. D. Fuller, "Mission Work in India", *The Outlook - A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (18), May 28th 1904, p.13; A. E. Henderson, "India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.ii; A.

sanctioned and promoted female immorality, made all the worse by its links to the religious establishments in the cases of temple dancing girls. The Reverend Fuller, an American missionary in India, at a mission meeting in Wellington told of the "Tens of thousands of girls 12 years of age...married to gods, which means they are religiously set apart to a life of shame in the temples or bazaars."⁵² The missionary women believed these cultural and religious practices were degrading and oppressive because they did not give Indian women the opportunity to fulfil their role as wives and mothers according to the Western ideal of femininity. The supposed destruction of the temple girl's morality and dignity was symbolic of the wider social and moral disorder that the missionary women believed was evident in Indian society. The destruction of innocent childhoods by Hinduism, also evident in this reference to temple girls, was a common motif in missionary literature.

The destruction of an innocent childhood, especially that of Indian girls, by the cultural and religious practices in India was highlighted as another way in which Hinduism degraded Indian women. Children were also seen as important in the missionary project of converting India because it was believed that to gain the confidence and conversion of Indian children was to ensure the ultimate aims of wider conversion.⁵³ Missionary women singled out the practice of child marriage as particularly horrible as it forced girls into marriage early, not allowing them a suitable childhood. The missionary women write

E. Henderson, "The Place of Women in the Hindu Religion", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iv; "India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (19), December 1908, p.vii

⁵² Rev. M. D. Fuller, "Mission Work in India", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (18), May 28th 1904, p.13

⁵³ A. E. Henderson, "A Plea for Indian Women", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (16), April 1909, p.viii; "Appendix XXI – Foreign Missions Report – Report from Madras by Helen MacGregor", *PGA – Dunedin*, November 1906, pp.200-201

of the horror of “millions of child-wives (and worse still child widows)”.⁵⁴ The belief was that Indian girls were forced to marry as children and that they were taken from their family to a life of slavery in the extended family home of their husbands. According to the New Zealand women missionaries this promoted the destruction of their health as well as their happiness and was an “evil example of every kind of domestic unhappiness”⁵⁵ forcing girls to “grow old in pollution while young in years.”⁵⁶ The missionary women contrasted with this picture of suffering Indian childhood, the carefree, happy and Christian childhood that ideally existed within New Zealand.⁵⁷ The image of Indian girls was therefore a plight of innocent children who endured a harsh life and were therefore to be pitied.⁵⁸

The treatment of child widows was also used as an example of the ‘immorality’ and ‘barbarism’ of the Hindu religion in forcing upon young innocent girls a life of misery and penance in the name of religion. A report of this in *The Outlook* explains that a child widow in India must be: “stripped of her jewellery and have her head shaved all her life, and wear a plain cloth, and in many cases live on one meal a day, with fasting besides; and if her parents fail to treat her thus, it is because they are not religious.”⁵⁹ The New Zealand missionary women understood that these were severe restrictions because of the emphasis placed on use of jewellery, costume and hair in defining the Hindu feminine

⁵⁴ “India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (19), December 1908, p.vii

⁵⁵ Alice Henderson, “The Place Of Women In The Hindu Religion”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iv

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Rev. M. D. Fuller, “Mission Work in India”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (18), May 28th 1904, p.13

ideal.⁶⁰ The missionary women believed that in restricting the femininity of the widow, the Hindu customs of widowhood reduced Indian women's dignity.⁶¹ While missionary women believed this was degrading for all Indian widows, missionary women acknowledged that there was a large population of young widows.⁶² This was seen as particularly tragic because there was no escape from the cultural restrictions of widowhood and these girls were therefore prevented from becoming wives and mothers, the feminine ideal, in the future. The importance of costume in the contrasting Indian and Missionary ideals of femininity is examined further in chapter six. The missionary women's belief that Indian girls' childhoods, were destroyed by practices such as child marriage, child widowhood and life as temple dancing girls sanctioned by Hinduism, helped to influence the way in which they perceived Indian domestic space and dress, especially the concepts of *zenana* (seclusion) and veiling, which are also discussed in chapter six.

Indian women were presented by the New Zealand missionary women as degraded and oppressed because, as trapped victims of patriarchal religion, they were not able to access the emancipatory benefits of Christianity. To the missionary women, conversion to Christianity would both save the Indian women from the cruel practices of Hinduism that reduced their dignity and femininity and emancipate them from evil Brahmins and husbands thus restoring their religious agency. The position of women in Hinduism was generalised by the New Zealand missionary women and failed to take into account the

⁶⁰ C J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame – Popular Hinduism and Society in India*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), pp.187-188

⁶¹ E. M. H. Giesen, "Some Superstitions of India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, March 1906, p.ii

⁶² "Hindoo Women", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (1), July 1st 1893, p.9

differences in practice between various sects of Hinduism or differences between different geographical areas of India. The missionaries blamed what they saw as immoralities and abuses, on a religious ideology that did not exist as a coherent whole. This simplified attitude to Hinduism and Indian women's place within it can be seen in an article by Miss Henderson on Indian religion in *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* in which she describes the central tenants of Hinduism as the holiness of the cow and the "depravity of women."⁶³

If Indian women were seen as victims of their religion they were also seen as an impediment to the conversion of their sons and husbands because of their devotion and dedication to the very religion that imprisoned them. The missionaries believed that the religion practised by Indian women was a perverted form of religion, different from that practised by men. They believed that the religious beliefs of Indian women were emotionally driven in comparison with the deliberation and scholarly approach of men. The missionaries saw women as associated with religious rituals and practices, such as the worship of idols with offerings of fruits and flowers⁶⁴ and the "endless repetition of meaningless incantations",⁶⁵ rather than with the 'real' masculine religion, authenticated by religious scriptures. It was believed that these rituals undertaken by women were inconsequential and without meaning and only tolerated by Indian men in order to keep Indian women happy.⁶⁶ Distinctions had been made in the nineteenth century by British colonial officials between a higher form of Hinduism, the formal scholarly religion of

⁶³ A. E. Henderson, "India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.iv

⁶⁴ H. MacGregor, "A Talk on Temples", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, April 1907, p.ii

⁶⁵ Ibid.

texts, and a religion of custom and practice, which was seen as inferior. Indian women were consequently associated in the writings of the missionary women with an 'inferior' form of Hinduism that tied Indian women more closely to practices regarded as superstition. It is evident that the missionary women possessed a simplistic understanding of Hinduism. New Zealand missionary women generalised Hinduism and failed to appreciate the variety of practice and belief between various sects and different geographical areas within India. The missionaries saw Indian women's exclusion from priestly functions as an indication that they were perceived by Indian males to be incapable of receiving formal religious instruction and unable to participate in important religious ceremonies.⁶⁷

Indian women's misplaced religious devotion and ignorance in general therefore needed to be addressed in order to convert them and remove the barrier to the more general conversion of women's domestic influence over the religious beliefs of Indian men. This is seen in the valedictory speech of Miss Rosalie MacGeorge, in which she comments: "and so it is that amongst the greatest obstacles to the conversion to Christianity of the Hindoo men is the influence of mothers devoted, in the dense darkness of ignorance, to the Brahmins and the gods."⁶⁸

Missionaries believed that Indian women had no individual agency when it came to their religious lives. Either their actions were determined by their ignorance, which the

⁶⁶ A. E. Henderson, "The Place of Women in the Hindu Religion", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, pp.iii-iv

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1886, p.174

Brahmans manipulated or they acted on the instructions of their husbands. This lack of agency outraged the missionary women's sense of evangelical sisterhood, because to the missionary women it was their religion that gave them the power and justification for working in public for the benefit of society and their 'sisters'. If missionaries saw Indian women as victims, there was therefore the need for a villain. The missionaries gave this role to the Brahman priests who were seen as the driving force of the Hindu religion, and Indian men, in their roles as husbands and sons, who were representatives of a controlling and restricting patriarchal society. Acknowledgement of women's devotion to Hinduism and their daily rituals⁶⁹ did not mean that the missionaries had to give up their image of women as victims. Instead missionaries used women's religious devotion as evidence of their victimisation by corrupt Brahmans and husbands, who kept women ignorant and manipulated them for their own religious and material gain.

The link between the religious lives of Indian women and manipulation by male priests is evident in an article by Miss Henderson in which she states that: "The strength of Hinduism lies in the devotion of the women. Behind the women are the priests, and behind the priests, the powers of darkness."⁷⁰ Indian women were seen as possessing emotional qualities that allowed them to be easily manipulated.⁷¹ Brahmans were believed to promote immoral activities with dubious or false religious value in order to corrupt women, such as for example the "immoral and cruel custom and superstition" of

⁶⁹ A. E. Henderson, "The Place of Women in the Hindu Religion", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, pp.iii-iv

⁷⁰ A. E. Henderson, "A Plea for Indian Women", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (16), April 1909, p.viii

⁷¹ Henderson, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, pp.iii-iv

dedicating dancing girls to temples and child brides.⁷² New Zealand missionary women also saw the exclusion of Indian women from priestly functions as an indication that Indian women were perceived by Indian males to be incapable of receiving formal religious instruction and unable to participate in important religious ceremonies.⁷³ That instruction in religious texts was seen by the missionary women as an essential element in Indian women's religious emancipation, illustrates again the privileged position of the male scriptural Hinduism in the minds of the missionary women and the importance of religious texts in the missionary women's ideas about religion. Restricting Indian women from accessing this 'true' form of Hinduism was seen by the missionary women as further evidence of the efforts of the Brahmin priests to oppress and take advantage of Indian women.

Indian husbands and sons were also complicit in the oppression of Indian women, according to the New Zealand missionary women. Alice Henderson explained the presence of women at temples undertaking offering and sacrifices as "deputed by their husbands or sons to act as their representatives". It was believed that an Indian woman's religious world revolved around her husband whom the scriptures dictated should be loved and worshiped as a god. The missionary women used the Indian scriptures and quoted passages from the religious texts to prove the subjugation of Indian women to their husbands. Alice Henderson in an article on the position of women within Hinduism quoted the Padma Purana as stating that: "There is no god on earth for a woman but her husband. Let all her words and actions give public proof that she looks upon her husband

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

as a god.”⁷⁴ According to the missionaries, Indian women therefore had no place or role within their religion other than in relation to their husbands, a view emphasised by reference to the Laws of Manu: “No sacrifice is allowed to women apart from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting.”⁷⁵ However, the missionaries ignored the scriptures which dictated the duties of the husband to his wife and which provide a more balanced view of the ideal of Hindu marriage.⁷⁶ New Zealand missionary women used these ancient religious texts in their writings as statements of reality, representing both women’s daily life experiences and their position within their own religion, rather than the articulation of a religious ideal.

Therefore, the representation of Indian women as victims of a patriarchal religion which degraded and oppressed them and in which they had no independent agency in their religious thought or practice, justified the missionary women’s identity as “White Angels” and their rescue of Indian women through conversion to Christianity. Indian women’s lack of agency and the need for New Zealand women to act as their ‘sisters’ for their emancipation and salvation is evident in a quote from the Harvest Field magazine: “Poor souls, ignorant and lacking freedom for social intercourse, how would they set about helping themselves?”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Henderson, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iii

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ W. Doniger and B.K. Smith, (trans.), *The Laws of Manu*, (London, Penguin Books, 1991), pp.189-190 and 197-198

⁷⁷ A. E. Henderson, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iv

New Zealand missionary women also perceived Indian women as degraded and oppressed because they were not able to fulfil their potential as wives and mothers in the framework of Western femininity and the ideal family. New Zealand ideas about what constituted the ideal family had been challenged and altered in the late nineteenth century. Demographic changes in New Zealand society and changes in evangelical ideas about the family influenced this shifting ideal of what constituted the family. New Zealand's population stabilised in the late nineteenth century, with the equalisation of the sex ratio resulting in an increased proportion of married couples and established families.⁷⁸ These demographic trends corresponded with a new idealisation of the family articulated by the evangelical Protestant churches. Smaller families, greater equality in marriage legislation, and a focus on the importance of motherhood and home management were part of this new family ideal.⁷⁹ This new structure and ideal of the New Zealand family were part of the missionary women's framework of 'normal' models of femininity. Indian women were seen as degraded and oppressed because they did not have the option and ability to fulfil the ideal of femininity which included this new form of family. The concepts of family life that the missionary women took with them to India impacted on the way they perceived and attempted to reform Indian women and Indian domestic space, an issue which will be dealt with in more detail in the second section of this thesis.

Thus, the image of the degraded Indian women outraged the missionary women's sense of sisterhood. Indian women were seen by the missionary women to be degraded by men,

⁷⁸ E. Olssen, "Towards a New Society", G. Rice, (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.257-258

husbands and Brahmins and spiritually disadvantaged through not having access to the rescuing religion of Christianity. These were the ideas that the missionary women had developed about Indian women before they left New Zealand through missionary literature. When they went to India these ideas were refined, reaffirmed and developed. This will be dealt with in greater detail in the chapters on space and dress.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp.263-264

CHAPTER FIVE

PERSPECTIVES: LANDSCAPES AND LIVING SPACES

This chapter will investigate the ways in which New Zealand missionary women, in accordance with their preconceived expectations of India, constructed Indian landscape and spaces. These constructions reinforced both the missionary women's identities as rescuers and their perceptions of the Indian 'other' by creating spatial boundaries between themselves and the Indian communities in which they worked. It was important in garnering both financial and moral support for the missionary endeavour, that the New Zealand missionary women found a way of communicating the Indian landscape and images of Indian space to their home audience of mission supporters. In order to communicate these images the missionary women relied on a range of different frameworks already used to describe the 'other'. Most importantly they drew upon the rhetoric of rescuing which brought together ideas from feminist, imperial and evangelical ideologies. New Zealand missionary women also employed the language of Romanticism and Orientalism in their descriptions of the Indian landscape in order to portray the exotic nature of the Indian landscape and thus engage the imagination of mission supporters. While some of these influences on the missionary women's writings seem paradoxical, they each formed part of a complex understanding of Indian landscapes and space built up by the missionaries. In their understandings of the 'other' the New Zealand missionary women tended to create binary oppositions, so that landscape and space tended to be described in oppositional terms.

The process of defining identities by constructing spatial and personal boundaries was reciprocal. The ways in which the Indian communities defined space and constructed boundaries was often fundamentally different from that of the New Zealand missionaries, drawing on Indian religious theology that underpinned ideas of purity and pollution, femininity and caste. Examining Indian ideas about space in contrast to the missionary perspective allows further insight into the relationships between the two cultures. For both groups the boundaries and identities created were dynamic, drawn by a process of interaction. Hence the spatial and cultural boundaries that resulted proved to be flexible, fluid and adaptable.

LANDSCAPES

As Giselle Byrnes points out "landscape is a cultural construction, a particular perspective of land. When arriving in a 'new land', Europeans applied their own frames of reference to what they saw."¹ The concept of 'landscape' encompasses the physical and geographical environment but also refers to how human society is placed within that environment. Descriptions of the physical landscape also reveal how a place or environment is understood and perceived by those encountering it. New Zealand missionary women constructed a landscape of India in order to imbue the physical environment with meaning. India was constructed by New Zealand missionary women in accordance with their ideas of reform in order to define their own place as reformers within India. Indeed, the Indian landscape presented a complex and multifaceted picture to the New Zealand missionary women. As a group, the missionary women's

construction of the Indian landscape was therefore equally complex and sometimes paradoxical.

New Zealand missionary women's constructions of Indian landscape and space drew substantially from the discursive frameworks of Romanticism, Orientalism and Reform. While elements of these frameworks were drawn together to form a complex understanding of the Indian landscape, New Zealand missionary women created a binary opposition between an idealised Indian countryside and the built and peopled spaces of the Indian cities. In comparing an idealised Indian countryside to the Indian cities, the New Zealand missionary women employed ideas from both the Romantic and Reform traditions. The British Romantic movement from the early nineteenth century, which influenced literature, art and poetry, praised unstructured nature and placed it in opposition to the formalised and ordered country estates of the eighteenth century. Romantic ideas were a rejection of the man-made, the towns and all the new social problems that went with them, in favour of the untouched wild countryside.² By the late nineteenth century social reformers perceived the cities and their urban poor, as sites in need of reform. In New Zealand at the time, city slums were linked to ideas of physical danger, especially from disease and moral danger, which accompanied the erosion of Godly home life.³ Hence reform ideas enhanced the Romantic's split between the

¹ G. Byrnes, "Surveying Space : Constructing the colonial landscape", in B. Dalley & B. Labrum eds., *Fragments - New Zealand Social and Cultural History*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2000), p.60

² G. Ferguson, *Building the New Zealand Dream*, (Palmerston North, Dunmore Press in association with The Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1994), p.25

³ M. Tennant, "The Decay of Home Life? The Home in Early Welfare Discourses", B. Brooks (ed.), *At Home in New Zealand - History, Houses, People*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 2000), pp.26-27
For an explanation of the links between turn of the century urbanisation and poverty and reform in Canada see C. L. Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877 - 1918*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp.9-10

idealised countryside and the dangerous and diseased city. In reform rhetoric the countryside represented the solution to city poverty and disease offering open spaces, fresh air and potential for a healthy life, which they believed would prevent racial degeneracy.⁴ Carol Lee Bacchi has explained how social reformers in colonial Canada at the turn of the twentieth century often articulated a desire for a pre-industrial and rural model of society.⁵ In short, New Zealand missionary women drew on a long and international tradition of Romanticism and Reform in their construction of a binary opposition between Indian countryside and Indian cities.

Accordingly, the image of Indian cities in New Zealand missionary women's writings is negative, with Indian cities portrayed as crowded, dirty spaces. Mary Salmond describes Jagadhri city as "that dirty city that is so backwards and conservative."⁶ The state of the city also impacts on Jagadhri's inhabitants with Mary Salmond critical that Jagadhri residents seem "satisfied with their piles of rupees and with their worldly goods. They want nothing more."⁷ To Mary Salmond, the inhabitants of Jagadhri have abandoned the spiritual and heavenly rewards of a Godly life in favour of the instant and material rewards of a worldly existence. Hence, the disagreeable nature of the city is seen as manifested in the characteristics and material motivations of the people who live there. Nurse Beale⁸ also disapproves of the crowded nature of the cities, which she sees as

⁴ P. Isaac and E. Olssen, "The Justification for Labour's Housing Scheme – The Discourse of 'the Slum'", B. Brookes, (ed.), *At Home in New Zealand – Houses, History, People*, (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 2000), pp.109-110

⁵ Bacchi, p.10

⁶ M. Salmond, "Missionary Letter", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (110), January 8th 1919, p.ix

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ No reference to Nurse Beale's Christian name in primary sources.

creating disorder: "To me the numbers in India are appalling. The houses are built very high, and are all shapes and sizes."⁹

New Zealand missionary women constructed the Indian villages and countryside in opposition to this. In comparison with the lives of city dwellers, which are portrayed as hectic and concerned only with commerce and accumulating wealth, rural life is portrayed as simple and satisfying, more open to the Christian message. Mary Salmond's comments regarding the inhabitants of Jagadhri city are contrasted with her reflection that she "likes to look out over the many villages where there are baptised Christians and many others asking and preparing for baptism. There the harvest is being gathered in."¹⁰ Here an idealised version of the countryside is included with the Christian metaphors of sowing and reaping, a prominent biblical and missionary motif. The image of the harvest was a pertinent one for New Zealand missionary women as it represented ideas of gathering in a harvest of souls. To the New Zealand missionary women, their work especially in the schools was seen to be planting the seed of Christianity, with the benefits reaped when India became Christian. Helen MacGregor describes her work in the girl's school in Madras as planting "the seed, which is the word of God...and shall spring up and grow till, one day, it shall overthrow the idolatry and superstition of its environment".¹¹ The importance of the image of the harvest in the missionary rhetoric is evident in the title of the New Zealand PWMU's journal entitled *The P.W.M.U Harvest Field*. Hence the image of an idyllic rural Indian landscape was one of particular

⁹ Nurse Beale, "Mission Outlook – Indian Mission", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VI (21), June 24th 1899, p.27

¹⁰ M. Salmond, "Missionary Letter", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (110), January 8th 1919, p.ix

¹¹ H. MacGregor, "A Talk on Temples", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, April 1907, p.ii

resonance to the New Zealand missionary women with their tradition of rural biblical metaphors.

Emma Beckingsale also portrays an idealised image of the Indian countryside and village life in an account of a trip down the river to visit a village in Bengal:

The banks are a wealth of fern and reeds, broad-leaved kachus, long trumpet-shaped white lilies, and graceful palm-like cane. The water is bestrewn with lotus and blue and white star like flowers. The village boys are swimming and splashing in the water, sending up gleaming showers of spray, laughing and shouting, and playing merry tricks on one another. In little sheltered coves, half-hidden by the leafy screens of the trees and creepers, women in their gaily-bordered saris fill their water-pots, or bathe their brown babies. The sun glints through the trees and turns their brass lotas to gold.¹²

In this account, nature makes the picture beautiful and exotic and the people within this landscape are depicted as happy and carefree. Emma Beckingsale presents the village scene as one of innocence, an Eden-like setting uncorrupted by the influences of the city. The countryside idealised in this account is not the structured agricultural countryside of fields and pastures, but the wild trees and plants of the untamed Indian jungle.

This pattern of idealising the Indian countryside, in particular the jungle, is seen in many of the missionary women's writings. Emma Beckingsale describes the "jungle with the gleaming of light piercing into the darkness & shooting between the branches all combined to make the most exquisite picture",¹³ while Rosalie MacGeorge writes of the idyllic nature of the Indian country landscape as she describes the village of Furreedpore

¹²E. Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, (Dunedin, H. H. Driver, New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society, 1912), p.19

¹³ Emma Beckingsale Diaries – "Brahmanbaria and Barisal", February 1st 1896 (CBC)

as “a lovely place, with its jungle walks and pretty roads”.¹⁴ Jessie Blair also describes the beauty of the mountain village of Mahabaleshwar, with its “pretty jungle trees”, lakes and “magnificent” sunsets, in contrast to the city of Poona where she usually works.¹⁵ The emphasis placed on the beauty of the jungle by the missionaries reflects the Romantic ideas of the desirability of the unstructured landscape and adds to the image of the countryside as an idyllic setting.

Constructions of landscape and space are gendered.¹⁶ New Zealand missionary women’s constructions of the Indian jungle as idyllic and picturesque illustrate this gendered nature of landscape and space. The “pretty jungle trees”¹⁷ that Jessie Blair describes above contrast with the violent and dangerous Indian jungle that is represented in male literary discourses about India. In Leonard Woolf’s novel, *The Village in the Jungle* the Sri Lankan jungle in the early twentieth century is depicted as “evil”, a place where humans and animals struggle for survival¹⁸ and Robert Sencourt describes the Indian jungle as: “wild...a dense tropic[sic] forest in which some beast of prey hides crouching”.¹⁹ Woolf’s perception of the tropical jungle as dangerous seems the antithesis of the jungle walks in Rosalie MacGeorge’s writing, which are presented as “pretty”²⁰, implying safety. One explanation for these different gendered perceptions of the jungle may be found in the gendered activities that are being undertaken in the jungle. In the masculine

¹⁴ R. MacGeorge, “For the Children – Miss MacGeorge’s Letter”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1887, p.135

¹⁵ J. D. Blair, “Mission Outlook – A Letter from India”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VII (79), August 4th 1900, p.23

¹⁶ Blunt and Rose, pp.1-3

¹⁷ Blair, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VII (79), August 4th 1900, p.23

¹⁸ E. F. C. Ludowyk, “Introduction”, L. Woolf, *The Village in the Jungle*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.ix

¹⁹ R. Sencourt, *India in English Literature*, (Port Washington, Kennikat Press, 1923), p.10

tradition the jungle in India is a site for 'masculine' activities such as hunting and sport,²¹ while the New Zealand missionary women are merely observers of the jungle, activity is restricted to walking. There is also the possibility that the missionary women purposefully constructed the Indian jungle in a more positive and passive tone, conscious of their home audience's concern towards missionary women in dangerous environments.

The term often used by the missionary women to describe elements of the Indian landscape, in particular the natural environment is "picturesque".²² The picturesque was an accepted aesthetic category used in the nineteenth century by commentators on landscape and artists to comment on the irregularity and variation of nature, in comparison to the tamed, cultivated and symmetrical ideals of eighteenth century notions of classical beauty. The term 'picturesque' encompassed ideas of the exotic, in particular indigenous flora and fauna, and was evident in the literature of Coleridge and Austen.²³ Picturesque views were supposed to be pleasant to the viewer as well as invoking reflection.²⁴ Giselle Byrnes argues that the concept of the 'picturesque' allowed colonial commentators on native landscapes to extend their statements from a specific view to include a "god like survey of the great".²⁵ This is evident in Alice Henderson's book, *The Shield of India*: "If only you could hear the call to lift up your eyes and look until all

²⁰ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1887, p.135

²¹ Sencourt, p.8

²² E. Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, (Dunedin, H. H. Driver, New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society, 1912), p.19

²³ Byrnes, pp.68-9

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.70-1

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.72

India filled your horizon; look until your imagination became enthralled by her lofty mountains, her mighty rivers".²⁶

The idealised rural Indian landscape which the missionary women constructed was a reflection of the Romantic and Orientalist discursive frameworks prominent in British imperial thought and writings on India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Oddie has demonstrated, in the wider British missionary discourse, missionaries did not view India in precisely the same Orientalist frameworks as did British imperial officials.²⁷ Nevertheless, the way in which New Zealand missionary women represented India was in fact influenced by the Orientalist ideas of the exotic.²⁸ Orientalism has become a complex and dense term, but I will use it here to describe the perceptions and images which were employed by European scholars, artists and colonial officials from the late eighteenth century in an attempt to understand the 'Orient', of which India was a part. This 'understanding' was based on the concept of the West and the East as binary opposites and the establishment of the people and the culture of India as 'others', the opposite of the values and beliefs of European civilisation.²⁹ In this discourse the 'Orient' represented to European people, according to Edward Said, was a "place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes".³⁰ The Orientalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was based on the work of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century scholars, including Sir William Jones and

²⁶ A. Henderon, *Shield of India*, (Auckland, Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1933), p.7 [note also the emotional response to India and referring to India in the feminine]

²⁷ G. A. Oddie, "'Orientalism' and British Protestant Missionary Constructions of India in the Nineteenth Century", *South Asia*, XVII (2), December 1994, p.29

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.37

²⁹ E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.2-3

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1

Alexander Dow, who translated the Indian textual tradition into English. New writings on India by such scholars as Dow and Jones were disseminated to the reading public of Europe through the work of Max Müller and the Romantic writers of the continent.³¹ This early period of Orientalist writing produced a discourse which presented India as passive, an object to be studied and observed, frozen in an imaginary and romantic timescape of a golden age in Indian history. Inherent in this discourse was also the belief that this mythical state which the land and people of India inhabited, was incapable of producing change through its own agency. Therefore, Indian civilisation was unable to achieve European standards of 'progress', and thus was relegated to an inferior position in relation to European civilisation.³² The concept that India and her peoples possessed limited agency, further supported and justified the New Zealand missionary women's mission of rescuing, as Indian's were believed to be unable to reform themselves.

As a group, New Zealand missionary women's impressions of India are reflective of these Orientalist frameworks that saw India as an exotic and sexualised landscape. Missionary literature was part of a wider imperial literature in which Romantic and Orientalist influences created descriptions of the colonised world which were often emotional in tone, focusing on their sensuousness, irrationality and the supernatural or magical nature of the landscape and culture.³³ Asia, especially in the literary traditions of the time, was presented as portraying feminine qualities and powers.³⁴ Therefore, the

³¹ G. Prakash, "Writing Post Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 32, No. 2, April 1990, p.385

³² Ibid., p.386

³³ E. M. Beekman, "The Passatist: Louis Couperus's Interpretation of Dutch Colonialism", *Indonesia*, 37, 1984, p.61

³⁴ Ibid., p.66

imperial idea of India as feminine and emotional was part of a wider imperial discourse which used these images to portray colonised landscapes and distinguish them from the European ones. This imperial paradigm was a way of seeing the colonised country and a way of perceiving the 'other', whereas Europe was perceived as masculine, with its characteristics therefore being rationality, scientific outlook and order. The missionary women incorporated these earlier imperial ideas into their writings on India. Alice Henderson describes India as a "Land of Desire", and goes on to portray India as:

thou enchantress!!! thou breaker of hearts!!! who, that has once set
foot upon thy shores can fail to carry through life the haunting
memory of thy sights and sounds?....to become thy bondslave of
love of thee?³⁵

The reaction and connection to India therefore is an emotional one. To Alice, India is seen as a female figure, full of allure but at the same time dangerous and to be approached with caution because of her ability to captivate the individual. The untamed sexuality of India is positioned as opposite to the ideas of moral and respectable European femininity as represented in the missionary women. There is the implication that India therefore needs to be controlled and to be civilised by the masculine British imperial culture. It is evident in Alice's description of India above, that she is passionately devoted to India as well as her work there. By utilising these Orientalist images of India as feminine, alluring and exotic, Alice attempts to persuade the home mission supporters to also develop an emotional attachment to India.

New Zealand missionary women reproduced a romantic representation of India, which combined Romantic and Orientalist influences, creating an image of a mythical and

arcadian world. This combination of influences produced an additional layer of understanding to the landscaping of India by the missionary women. This portrayal of India is evident in an article written by Alice Henderson for the *P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* in which she refers to India as a “dreamland”.³⁶ In this perception, India exists outside the accepted British notions of time and space, devoid of a physical and historical reality. In order to describe the cultural and environmental differences of the Indian landscape from the landscapes familiar to her New Zealand audience, Alice Henderson portrays India as like dreams, unbelievable; presenting a portrait of an imagined land. Elise Browne describes India in a similar way, writing of her first impressions of Colombo in her diary, describing it as a “wonderland”.³⁷ For many of the missionary women their first impressions of Asia were formed in Ceylon where the boats often stopped en route to the Indian peninsula. The missionary women considered this their first introduction to the cultures of the Greater Indian area.

In placing India within this mythical and Romantic setting it also separates it from linear time, producing a timescape where people and culture are unchanging. This unchanging nature of India draws on the Orientalist ideas of progressive history in which a civilisation advances from childhood to maturity and old age, and which places India in the position of the “eternal child detached altogether from time” and incapable of achieving progressive British statehood without help.³⁸ Connections between a childlike and dreamlike depiction of India also raise images of innocence, discussed in chapters

³⁵ A. E. Henderson, “India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.ii

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.i

³⁷ Elise Browne, *Elise Browne 1914 – 1991 Reminiscences of Nursing Career in India – 1918 – [ca.1923]*, MS Copy Micro 228, p.2 (ATL)

four and six, and the need for nurture, which are central to the female missionaries' constructions of India. Ronald Inden has also identified the use of the dream metaphor in the wider imperial discourse on India, in which it was used to represent irrationality of thought and practice in Indian society,³⁹ further supporting the missionaries' perception that India required the order of British culture and religion.

Orientalist ideas often emphasised the material wealth of the 'East'. New Zealand missionary women also emphasised the exotic nature of the Indian landscape drawing on images of wealth and luxury. The bazaars were seen as particular sites of opulence. Alice Henderson conveys to the missionary supporters at home the wealth and luxury evident in the bazaars. Her list of "golden embroideries, carvings of ebony, ivory and sandalwood, silver filigree, beaten copper and hammered brass"⁴⁰ are an inventory of products viewed as luxury, and therefore expensive goods in European countries of the time. During the nineteenth century there was an increasing demand in British societies among the middle classes who, with their rising incomes, could now afford luxury items such as Indian artefacts, jewellery and shawls.⁴¹ Like the British memsahibs discussed by Nupur Chaudhri in her chapter in the edited book *Western Women and Imperialism*,⁴² the New Zealand missionary women perpetuated the image of India as a warehouse of exotic

³⁸ Prakash, p.386

³⁹ R. Inden, *Imagining India*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp.38-41

⁴⁰ A. E. Henderson, "India", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.i

⁴¹ N. Chaudhuri, "Shawls, Jewellery, Curry, and Rice in Victorian Britain", in N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel eds., *Western Women and Imperialism – Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), p.232

⁴² Ibid.

and luxury goods. Alice Henderson likens India to a “cave of Aladdin, flashing with gold and gems”.⁴³

The missionary women also portrayed Indian landscape as exotic by emphasising the spectacle of festivals and parades. Alice Henderson accentuates what she sees as unusual aspects of her environment such as “gorgeously caparisoned elephants”, the “sizzling, sputtering, fusillade of exploding squibs and rockets”, and festivals with the “Sanniyasis, the Saints and the Asectics”.⁴⁴ Through utilising this expressive Orientalist language, Alice Henderson draws her audience into ‘experiencing’ India encouraging their imaginations and hopefully also their support.

Thus, this sexualised image of India is seen in the missionary women’s writing as possessing feminine qualities combined with the pictures of the wealth and luxury of India. These images were a reflection of the ideas of exoticism that was present in the Orientalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The missionary women combined these exotic representations of the Indian landscape with a framework of Romanticism, to portray an idyllic Indian landscape in reference to the Indian countryside.

⁴³ A. E. Henderson, “India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.i

⁴⁴ Ibid.

PARADIGMS OF CLEANLINESS

Missionary women frequently used in their writings the language of cleanliness and hygiene which was current in the wider reform discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Accordingly, the concepts of cleanliness and hygiene, like the concept of global sisterhood, illustrate how the ideologies of feminism, evangelicalism and imperialism overlapped within these reform discourses. In the rhetoric of reform, ideas of cleanliness and hygiene were associated with ideas of civilisation, progress, morality and order. As this chapter and the subsequent chapter will argue, these concepts of cleanliness outlined below informed the way in which New Zealand missionary women in India represented and defined their ideas about femininity (domesticity), bodies and space. Cleanliness to New Zealand missionary women represented not only the absence of dirt but also a plethora of discursive meanings related to social purity, empire, civilisation, race and class.

The decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century were ones that saw a more scientific approach to both medicine and ideas about dirt and cleanliness. The discovery by Louis Pasteur in 1862 that infection is caused by bacteria, and the principles of antiseptics devised by Joseph Lister in the 1870s, helped to consolidate the importance of ideas of 'cleanliness' in British and settler societies. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the importance of cleanliness had become entrenched in the middle and upper classes in Britain and settler societies, as a symbol of wider cultural values relating to class, race and civilisation. Anne McClintock in her book *Imperial Leather* argues that the preoccupation with cleanliness can be seen in the middle class values of

the time. McClintock argues that the concept of cleanliness was central to the identity of the middle classes because it linked their material and class position to their moral and religious motivations and identities:

The emergent middle class values – monogamy (“clean” sex, which has value), industrial capital (“clean” money, which has value), Christianity (“being washed in the blood of the lamb”), class control (“cleaning the great unwashed”) and the imperial civilising mission (“washing and clothing the savage”)⁴⁵

Cleanliness to middleclass people of the time was therefore a central feature of their group identity and core beliefs. It is not surprising that the New Zealand missionary women who were predominately middle class and from British backgrounds employed concepts of cleanliness and dirt to differentiate themselves from the Indian people and to define Indian space.

As Judith Rowbotham has established, to the British, and those in the British settler colonies, the attainment of cleanliness represented a hiatus in civilisation and progress.⁴⁶ The use of concepts of cleanliness and dirt became a way in which to distinguish between the British and non-British. The concept of cleanliness as a marker for civilisation had been, and continued to be, used in home missions to the working classes in Britain. They provided a way of categorising the working classes, as well as differentiating them from the middle classes. Susan Thorne has highlighted the way in which the middle classes and especially those involved in missionary work saw similarities between the British poor and the indigenous people of their empire, and represented both these groups by

⁴⁵ A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York, Routledge, 1995), p.208

⁴⁶ J. Rowbotham, ““Hear an Indian Sister’s Plea”: Reporting on the Work of 19th Century British Female Missionaries,” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 21 (3) 1998, p.258

using similar rhetoric.⁴⁷ Emma Beckingsale's diary from her time in Edinburgh demonstrates how dirt and disease were used to distinguish between middle and lower class areas in Britain:

From the Bridge you can look down and see the awful squalor – people sitting on the doorsteps and cobblestones – in rags and dirt – children carrying others as big as themselves – and themselves all misshapened with rickets. I never dreamed that there were so many rickety children in the world as I have seen in London and Edin. alone.⁴⁸

While the evangelical and imperial discourses on class and race were not identical, they were connected through the idea of civilisation and the possibility of salvation. Consequently, the middle class discourses of race and class influenced and reinforced each other, while remaining separate.⁴⁹ Thus, to adopt British middle class methods and modes of washing and hygiene was to become civilised. This tied into the “New Imperialism” of the time, which emphasised the responsibility towards the civilisation of colonial societies and the moral reformation of colonial individuals.⁵⁰

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporaries saw the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene, especially in the home, as the responsibility of women.⁵¹ As such, cleanliness became an essential element in the feminist reform ideologies of the period. Feminist reforms, of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain

⁴⁷ S. Thorne, ““The Conversion of Englishmen and the Conversion of the World Inseparable” Missionary Imperialism and the Language of Class in Early Industrial Britain”, F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire – Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, (Berkeley, University of Californian Press, 1997), p.248

⁴⁸ Emma Beckingsale Diaries - “Edinburgh”, September 9th 1895, p.1 (NE)

⁴⁹ Thorne, 1997, p.241

⁵⁰ M. T. Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp.9-10

⁵¹ Rowbotham, 1998, p.258

and settler colonies, made cleanliness a public issue by attempting to reform domestic space and therefore bringing it into the public arena for scrutiny and legislation. Reformers campaigning for temperance, claimed that for women to ensure the physical and moral cleanliness of their own domestic space they had to ensure society was clean, both physically and morally. The NZWCTU had special departments dedicated to campaigning on issues of hygiene and cleanliness,⁵² and their journal *The White Ribbon*, ran a number of articles on the concepts of health and hygiene.⁵³ It was an easy transition therefore to see it as women's work to secure the cleanliness of 'heathen' societies; women's duty to make them physically and spiritually clean.⁵⁴

These concepts of cleanliness allowed women in the reform movements to draw boundaries between themselves and others, based on their identity as white, middle class, Christian women. These same ideas however, also presented the opportunity to redraw or break down these barriers, through the "other" learning and conforming to the missionary women's ideas and norms of cleanliness. Cleanliness therefore had the potential to effect the regeneration of both individuals and society in general. One of the social reform movements of the time, was the temperance movement which was supported by groups within both the Presbyterian⁵⁵ and Baptist churches in New Zealand.⁵⁶ It sought to regenerate society by purifying and cleaning up the drinking habits of individuals. The emphasis on cleanliness by social reform groups in British settler societies is evident in

⁵² S. Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), p.25

⁵³ L.C. Purington, "A Open Air Gospel", *The White Ribbon*, 10 (115), February 1905, pp.10-11; "A Hygienic Home", *The White Ribbon*, 9 (103), December 1903, p.11

⁵⁴ Rowbotham, 1998, p.258

⁵⁵ I. Breward, "1871-1901: Clamant Needs, Determined Battlers", D. McEldowney (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa*, (Wellington, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), pp.61-62

the promotion by the W.C.T.U in Canada of "Happy Thought Soap".⁵⁷ These discourses were generated by the reform movements of the day, which were concerned with moral and social degeneration, such as the temperance movements and welfare agencies. These societies were often controlled or dominated by women as they felt they were "uniquely qualified to comment" on these issues as they concerned family and the home.⁵⁸ Women in these reform movements thus intentionally linked their moral and social ideals with domestic space. For example, the W.C.T.U.'s motto was "For God, Home and Humanity".⁵⁹ The ideals which were supposed to be represented in a 'good' home were the benefits of "cleanliness, order and good living".⁶⁰

The evangelical tradition added another element to these concepts of cleanliness and hygiene. To evangelicals, cleanliness was next to godliness, so those 'heathen' peoples were considered dirty.⁶¹ Indians' spiritual impurity was reflected in their physical condition as well, so to be physically clean was also to be spiritually cleansed. In the Evangelical tradition emphasis was placed on baptism, which signified the washing away of one's sins.⁶²

Feminist reform workers in New Zealand believed that the ideals of domesticity represented in these discourses of cleanliness were a model of British home life, which in

⁵⁶ There were frequent articles supporting temperance in *The New Zealand Baptist* for example "Temperance Column", *The New Zealand Baptist*, January 1889, p.4

⁵⁷ M. Valerde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water – Moral Reform in English Canada 1885 – 1925*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1991), p.40

⁵⁸ Tennant, 2000, p.25

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.26

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.24

⁶¹ Rowbotham, 1998, p.257

⁶² Ibid.

turn, represented the foundation of imperial greatness. Consequently, its replication should be attempted in the colonial settings of New Zealand.⁶³ The New Zealand missionary women carried this model with them to India, where it shaped their views on Indian domestic space and where they attempted to reconstruct these models and ideals in the Indian environment through the establishment of European spaces such as missionary compounds, schools, hostels and hospitals. They also sought to influence and reform the Indian domestic space which, unlike Indian landscape, was seen and portrayed as the antithesis of the European ideal. In doing so they sought to liberate the occupants from a degraded and imprisoning life and religion.

REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

The missionary women presented a human world that was in stark contrast to their construction of the exotic and arcadian Indian rural landscape and which justified their rescuing and civilising mission. The paradigms of cleanliness influenced the way in which New Zealand missionary women understood and constructed space, gender and identity within cultural encounters with the Indian communities. Concepts of cleanliness were used in New Zealand missionary women's writings to create boundaries between Indian and European spaces. Investigation of this literature reveals the ways in which concepts of race and class featured in New Zealand missionary women's perceptions of space. New Zealand missionary women interacted with Indian communities in multiple spaces, public and private, secular and religious. However, each of these spaces was defined and portrayed by the New Zealand missionary women according to paradigms of

⁶³ Tennant, 2000, p.25

cleanliness which conflated the ideas of cleanliness and hygiene with ideas of civilisation, progress, morality and order. This section will investigate the way in which New Zealand missionary women interacted with, and constructed Indian public, religious and domestic space according to these ideas of cleanliness.

As mentioned previously, in the New Zealand missionary women's writings Indian urban public and domestic spaces, provided the antithesis to the idealised rural landscapes. The New Zealand missionary women, in order to describe Indian public space and inscribe the space with meaning, implemented the paradigms of cleanliness also discussed above. By portraying the dirt and disease of Indian public spaces New Zealand missionary women were constructing an image that perpetuated racial and class hierarchies and justified their missionary work in India.

In an article in *The Outlook*, Nurse Beale takes her readers on a tour through Bombay, starting with "the European portion of Bombay [where] the roads and paths are very clean."⁶⁴ While these are public roads they are viewed as different and therefore distanced from the rest of Bombay primarily because they are "wide" and "very clean". In keeping with the paradigms of cleanliness, the description of clean roads and paths by Nurse Beale are evidence of British order and civilisation placed within a chaotic and dirty native city. The relationship between class, civilisation and cleanliness is evident in Nurse Beale's description of the business district of Bombay in which wealthy Indians are presented as clean and Anglicised. The Indians visible in these surroundings are "high

⁶⁴ "Mission Outlook – Indian Mission", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VI (21), June 24th 1899, p.26

caste men [who] have keen intelligent faces, and numbers [of whom] hold high positions in Government".⁶⁵ In her article Nurse Beale also conflates the idea of caste and class. These Indian "high caste men" fit with the vision of this space as clean and ordered and thus British. Their "well-dressed"⁶⁶ outward appearance and their obvious acceptance of British ideas of education, commerce and government make them appropriate dwellers in this space, despite their Indian racial identity. Nurse Beale thus presents this section of Bombay as clean because it is associated with British influence and 'progress'. This was evident in roads, buildings, British business and government and the Europeanised Indians.

This Anglicised part of Bombay is contrasted as the tour continues, with the "narrow streets of the native quarter, where thousands of people live and die, where thousands have lost their lives through this terrible plague, and yet they seem not to be missed".⁶⁷ The influence of reform ideology and its associated ideas about cleanliness and race are apparent in Nurse Beale's description of this "native quarter". The streets of the "native quarter" are described as narrow and crowded, implicating a scene of disorder:

Still if there is the slightest excitement the roads are blocked. To me the numbers in India are appalling. The houses are built high and are all shapes and sizes. A well-known missionary here told me he has counted 500 persons in one house.⁶⁸

The link between disorder, overcrowded conditions, dirt and disease was prominent in New Zealand reform thinking by the turn of the century due to growing recognition of the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Mission Outlook – Indian Mission", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VI (21), June 24th 1899, p.27

contagious nature of diseases.⁶⁹ India, in the wider imperial discourses, was depicted as a site of disease and hence a site of danger. Death rates in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were substantially higher than morality rates in contemporary Western countries with India enduring a high incidence of epidemic diseases such as plague and cholera.⁷⁰ Epidemics of plague had especially impacted upon Indian cities⁷¹ intensifying the association of Indian urban spaces with disease in the minds of the British and the New Zealand missionary women. While cholera was more prevalent in the Indian countryside, its association with the slums of urban Britain and America,⁷² is likely to have further perpetuated the link between Indian urban spaces and disease despite cholera occurring more frequently in the Indian countryside. Links between Indian space and disease imply more rigid boundaries than existed, as plague and epidemic diseases were not confined solely to Indian space. At times epidemic diseases also affected missionary compounds and schools.⁷³ However, observations that European communities in India suffered from diseases such as cholera to a lesser extent than the Indian population⁷⁴ are also likely to have reinforced the idea that Indian urban space was more susceptible to disease. Thus, Nurse Beale's description highlights the link between overcrowding and disease by linking the cramped conditions of the "native quarter" with the numbers that have died in recent plague epidemics. This association of disease with

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.26

⁶⁹ Issac and Olssen, p.107

⁷⁰ D. Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), pp.200-201

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p.166

⁷³ "Cholera at Madras – An Extract from Miss Henderson's Letter", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XIII (3), p.13

⁷⁴ Arnold, p.166

Indian space, suggests therefore that it is diseased *because* it is Indian space, and therefore by nature, overcrowded and unclean.

Similarities existed in the way in which class and race functioned in reform rhetoric and these are reflected in the New Zealand missionary women's writings. The relationship between dirt and disease in Nurse Beale's writing about Indian space is remarkably similar to Emma Beckingsale's description of Cowgate, a poor section of Edinburgh, noted above. Dirt and disease were used in the reform and missionary literature to identify space negatively; that which was *not* middle or upper class and that which was *not* British. It also illustrates that the concepts of cleanliness and dirt were used by the missionaries to distinguish *between* types of Indian space, with poorer and lower caste space presented as dirty and diseased in comparison with the cleaner spaces of wealthier or more Anglicised Indians. The New Zealand missionary women's writing also combined the concepts of class with the paradigms of cleanliness in order to describe Indian domestic spaces, which will be investigated later in the chapter.

New Zealand missionary women employed the cleanliness and dirt dichotomy to construct ideological as well as spatial boundaries between themselves and Indians. The spatial distinctions drawn by the missionaries were more than physical and material boundaries. The spatial distinctions also operated as metaphors of wider evangelical beliefs and missionary aims. In a letter reprinted in part in *The N. Z. Presbyterian* Helen MacGregor noted how she was:

struck with the contrast between the clean bright school with its court yard full of shrubs, on the one hand, and the narrow dirty

streets among which it is situated, on the other. It seems almost like a visual representation of the difference between the life of purity and hope in Christ, which we try to teach in our schools, and the dark, helpless and hopeless life which the Hindoo religion seems to prescribe for its women.⁷⁵

In this passage, Helen MacGregor highlights the way boundaries that define physical space were also used to represent ideological boundaries, in this case religious difference as represented through the mission schools. The distinction between physical space as clean or dirty is seen as a metaphor for the distinction between the clean and dirty souls. In Helen MacGregor's letter the orderliness and cleanliness of the mission compound represent the propriety and sobriety of Christian life. The reference to 'purity' in relation to Christianity is evocative of the social and moral reform movements of the time, which aimed to "regenerate both society and the human soul"⁷⁶ through the benefits of "light, soap and water".⁷⁷ In contrast the Hindu religion is seen to exemplify all that the missionary women sought to reform. Indian physical space is rendered "narrow" and "dirty", evocative of what New Zealand missionary women perceived to be the unhealthy moral and religious environment of Hinduism. Hinduism was presented as destructive and "hopeless", highlighting an inability to reform without the help of the missionaries and conversion to Christianity. New Zealand missionary women's constructions of Indian religious spaces also conflated their conceptual ideas about physical and spiritual cleanliness.

⁷⁵ "Zenana Mission in Madras", *The N. Z. Presbyterian*, VIII (1), July 1st 1893, p.18

⁷⁶ Valerde, p.17

⁷⁷ Ibid.

By constructing Indian religious spaces as dirty, New Zealand missionary women were passing comment on Indian religions and the lives of their adherents. The description of Indian religious space as dirty, is used by the missionaries as a sign of their disapproval over religious objects and rituals. Edith Giesen in an article on Indian religious practices in *The P. W. M. U. Harvest Field* describes roadside shrines as groups of “vermilion coloured stones” that “seem never to be cleaned.”⁷⁸ Edith Giesen’s description denies the significance and value of the shrine in Indian religious life by reducing it to a collection of dirty stones and implying its neglect. Jessie Blair also expresses her disapproval of Hindu objects of worship by emphasising their lack of cleanliness in her description of a temple in Mahableshtar, where “a bed is kept for the god to come and sleep in at nights. It was ornamented with gold trimmings, and certainly looked very dirty.”⁷⁹

While missionary ideas of cleanliness centred on concepts of hygiene and moral and religious integrity, Indian society also used concepts of cleanliness to create and maintain social boundaries. Hinduism is based on the distinction between the pure and impure in terms of caste pollution, and this aspect of Hinduism changed little from the nineteenth to the twentieth century when the sociologist Louis Dumont described it. In Hinduism dealing with organic life, and especially waste products, makes the Hindu ritually impure and requires performance of rituals to limit or remove the temporary impurity gained from dealing with this organic matter. However, due to religious and labour divisions in Indian society, some whose caste jobs involve work with leather or waste products are in a constant state of impurity. Others higher up in the social order place their own purity at

⁷⁸ E. M. H. Giesen, “Some Superstitions of India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, March 1906, p.iii

risk by dealing with those who were seen as impure.⁸⁰ Those whose occupations imply impurity or those who do not observe the rituals and rules for maintaining purity of themselves and others pose a risk to the social order.

In Western conceptions the danger of dirt and germs acted directly on the individual, affecting their health. However in the Hindu world the danger of impurity affected a group's ritual and thus social status.⁸¹ Consequently these very different concepts of cleanliness and pollution impacted on the cultural encounter between missionaries and the Indian communities in which they worked. Since the missionary women did not abide by the Indian concepts of purity and pollution, the Indian community would have seen them as unclean. This may have added to any resistance the missionaries might have faced in accessing Indian domestic space, especially the homes of the higher caste Hindus. However, most of the resistance to Christianity was directed at local Indian Christian converts, because of the threat of Christians' rejection of ideas of purity and impurity and its potential to undermine the social order especially in relation to caste. If an individual converted to Christianity and as a result stopped following caste rules and performing rituals to maintain their own individual purity, the entire caste suffered loss of status. The conversion of entire castes to Christianity and their resulting ritual impurity and rejection of caste, was seen by some Hindus, as potentially undermining to the wider social order of a village or state.⁸² The New Zealand missionary women had to deal with

⁷⁹ J. D. Blair, "Mission Outlook – A Letter from India", *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VII (79), August 4th 1900, p.23

⁸⁰ L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp.47-49

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.49

⁸² G. A. Oddie, "Protestant Missions, Caste and Social Change in India, 1850-1914", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 6 (3), September 1969, p.277

this in cases where local Christian communities in their areas suffered persecution or discrimination. Emma Beckingsale describes one occasion, in which she was asked to intervene where local Indian Christians had been prevented from accessing the village well.⁸³ Indian Christians, because Hindus perceived them as impure for breaking caste, as a result threatened the purity of the village's water supply if they used the same wells. Emma Beckingsale's encounter was part of a wider context of similar resistance by Hindus towards missionaries and Indian Christians, especially over access to wells.⁸⁴

The contrast between Indian concepts of pure and impure and missionary concepts of cleanliness and hygiene are also evident in the missionaries' writings on Indian religious space. Jessie Blair on her visit to the temple above, which she describes as dirty, is confused when she is refused entry to the temple because she might "defile it".⁸⁵ Jessie Blair misunderstood the Hindu rules of religious purity and pollution discussed above, which she would have violated by entering the inner sanctum of a Hindu temple. During a visit to the temples at Conjevaram, Helen MacGregor dismisses any religious significance in the use of temple water to bathe and cook with, as it offends her ideas of cleanliness and hygiene as well as being what she regards as superstitious. Instead she focuses on the "disgusting liquid", describing it as "the consistency of pea soup".⁸⁶ It is obvious therefore that Indian society had its own concepts of cleanliness, relating to ritual ideas of purity and impurity. However, New Zealand missionary women elevated

⁸³ Emma Beckingale Diaries - "Brahmanbaria and Barisal", February 29th 1896 (CBC)

⁸⁴ G. A. Oddie, *Hindu and Christian in South-East India*, (London, Curzon Press, 1991)

⁸⁵ J. D. Blair, "Mission Outlook - A Letter from India", *The Outlook - A Christian Weekly for the Home*, VII (79), August 4th 1900, p.23

⁸⁶ H. MacGregor, "To the Members of the P.W.M.U.", *The Outlook - A Christian Weekly for the Home*, IX (4), February 22nd 1902, p.35

their own British based concepts of cleanliness, both physical and spiritual, above the Hindu beliefs in purity and pollution. New Zealand missionary women used their concepts of cleanliness to distinguish between Christian and 'heathen' space and to criticise Indian religious space.

The construction of Indian religious spaces as dirty is not limited solely to the Hindu religious spaces. The missionary women's use of the presence of dirt to criticise the religious spaces of other Indian religions can be seen in Emma Beckingsale's description of her visit to a Buddhist temple thus:

On the centre of the shelf was a jar of half withered flowers & at each end an old and dirty salad oil bottle containing a very dirty selection of artificial flowers. Right – before Buddha was a brass vessal [sic] half full of ghee (clarified butter) also dirty in which were stuck two or three lighted tapers. On the right side of this was an armchair padded with filthy cushions.⁸⁷

As with Edith Giesen and the Hindu shrines, the significance of the religious items is belittled by their designation as dirty. The religious spaces and objects are seen and described as merely a collection of artefacts rather than symbols with associated religious meanings. The New Zealand missionary women perceived Indian religious space as dirty. According to the New Zealand missionary women's paradigms of cleanliness, dirt was representative of people who were uncivilised and backward. Descriptions of Indian religious spaces as dirty in the New Zealand missionary women's writings were therefore symbolic of the missionary women's beliefs in the inherent backwardness and immorality of Indian religions themselves. While New Zealand missionary women saw 'dirty' Indian religious spaces as emblematic of the Indian

⁸⁷ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, No title [Darjeeling] n.d.[c.1896] (CBC)

religions, the missionary women also adopted the paradigms of cleanliness to depict Indian domestic spaces, and hence comment on the moral state of the inhabitants.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand, domestic space became the site for discussion on reform, health and morality. As Margaret Tennant has pointed out the 'home' is more than a physical building, it also encompasses a wide variety of constructed and contested meanings, many of these with moral connotations.⁸⁸ In reform ideology in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the home and family were the institutions of social order.⁸⁹ The perceived disintegration of these institutions therefore made the home an important site of reform⁹⁰ and necessitated bringing the domestic space into the public sphere in order to campaign for wider social reform. Examples of such campaigns included those for temperance⁹¹ and unsweated labour.⁹² These reform movements focused on the moral and social degeneration of society and believed that the condition of the home was symbolic of the moral character of those living there. As a result, these reform programs were based on concepts of improving New Zealand health and morality by promoting the image of an ideal home, both in its physical construction and in the attributes it was to bestow on its occupants. Women were prominent in these reform initiatives, and because of the nineteenth century gender divisions between the private and public sphere, women were felt to be "uniquely qualified to comment" on these issues as they concerned family and the home.⁹³ Women involved in social reform therefore intentionally linked women's role as guardian of the domestic space with their

⁸⁸ Tennant, 2000, p.24

⁸⁹ Bacchi, p.11

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Coney, pp.24-25

⁹² Ibid., pp.220-221

⁹³ Tennant, 2000, p.25

moral and social reform agendas. As mentioned above, the WCTU's motto "For God, Home and Humanity",⁹⁴ highlights the way in which the domestic sphere and motherhood were revered by the women of the Union and the belief that women had a duty to extend the qualities of good motherhood beyond the domestic sphere and into wider society.⁹⁵ The ideals that were promoted by reformers as representative of a 'good' home were the benefits of "cleanliness, order and good living".⁹⁶ Social reform discourses which utilised gendered domestic ideals, influenced and shaped the way New Zealand missionary women working in India in this period perceived, wrote about and interacted within Indian domestic space.

To the New Zealand missionary women, Indian domestic space was an important site of reform. The missionaries believed that the Indian home was the foundation of Hinduism,⁹⁷ and so, in order to Christianise India, the home had to be reformed. Missionaries understood that any impact they made on students or adults outside of the home would be 'undone' unless female missionaries could gain access to Indian domestic space,⁹⁸ convert the secluded women and, through Christian influence, reform Indian domestic space. The importance of women as the guardians of religion in the domestic sphere and the need to access the *zenanas*, or women's quarters, and therefore Indian women, is demonstrated by the Reverend Alfred North in his valedictory speech for

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.26

⁹⁵ S. Dalton, "The Pure in Heart: The Women's Christian Temperance Union and Social Purity 1885-1930", (MA. (Hist), Victoria University, 1993), p.103

⁹⁶ Tennant, 2000, p.24

⁹⁷ A. E. Henderson, "A Plea for Indian Women", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (16), April 1909, p.viii; R. Seton, "Open Doors for Female Labourers: Women Candidates of the London Missionary Society 1875-1914", R. A. Bickers and R. Seton, (eds.), *Missionary Encounters – Sources and Issues*, (Richmond, Curzon Press, 1996), p.51

⁹⁸ "Women and the Mission Field", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (24), August 1910, p.vi

Rosalie MacGeorge before she left to begin her mission work in India. The Reverend North claimed that the proverb, "The hand that rocks the cradle moves the world," has special force in India" and therefore "[i]f the people of India are to be won for Christ, the women must be won".⁹⁹

New Zealand missionary women followed the trends of wider missionary and imperial feminist discourse in condensing all Indian domestic space into the image of the *zenana*.¹⁰⁰ The *zenana* was the secluded women's quarters within an Indian home.¹⁰¹ *Zenana* seclusion was a practice most common in the upper castes of Hindu society as well as in Muslim communities. The *zenana* was an area of the house that was designated to the females of mainly upper caste families to protect their caste purity from the polluting gaze of lower caste strangers, especially men. While male family members could access the *zenana*, non-family men were prevented from entering these domestic spaces. New Zealand missionary women, despite evidence to the contrary, discussed below, continued to write of the uniformity and universality of the practice of *zenana* seclusion [*purdah*], ignoring the different ways this custom was practised throughout India due to differences in class, caste and geography.¹⁰² This view of the *zenana* came to represent all Indian domestic space in the New Zealand missionary discourse. Along with

⁹⁹ "Miss MacGeorge's Departure – The Valedictory Address", *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1886, p.174

¹⁰⁰ A. Burton, "White Women's Burden – British Feminists and "Indian Woman," 1865-1915", N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), p.146

¹⁰¹ I. Lewis, *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs – A Dictionary of the Words of Anglo – India*, (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1991), p.253

¹⁰² R. Fitzgerald, "A 'Peculiar and Exceptional Measure': The Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India in the Later Nineteenth Century", D. M. Schreuder, *"Imperialism" Explorations in European Expansion and Empire*, (Sydney, Department of History Sydney University, 1991), p.180

education and health services, *zenana* work, became a central focus, of the missionary women's attempts at accessing and converting Indian women.

The relationship between dirt and disease in the missionary reform rhetoric is evident in Emma Beckingsale's record of her visit to a sick women in Brahmanbaria, Bengal. When she arrived she "found her lying on the floor on a dirty mat covered with a dirty cloth, dirty shawl and clothes & pots lying about round her and her day old baby unwashed...& not a particle of clothing upon it lying on a heap of dirty rags beside her."¹⁰³ Here, the link is again made between sickness, disease, dirt and Indian space, in this instance, domestic space. The sick woman has not been cared for and it takes the intervention of a New Zealand missionary women to rescue her from her own environment and make her well again. Her femininity is also brought into question as Emma points out her neglect of household and baby, and Emma assumes the maternal role of carer in the Indian woman's place.¹⁰⁴

The missionary women used descriptions of the dirty state of Indian domestic space to emphasise the degraded state of Indian women. In her book, *Gold of Tipperah* Emma Beckingsale describes how a widow she visited was found in an empty hut and sitting on a mud floor. She describes the women's appearance as "dejected" and "dishevelled".¹⁰⁵ Emma Beckingsale also describes how one patient of fifteen was "rather pretty (if only

¹⁰³ Emma Beckingsale Diaries – "Brahmanbaria", July 26th 1896 (CBC)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ E. Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, (Dunedin, H. H. Driver, New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society, 1912), p.23

she had been clean)".¹⁰⁶ In this case, the dirt of her surroundings disfigures the beauty of the Indian girl. It was beneficial for missionary women to portray Indian domestic space in this way as it supported the idea of Indian women as victims in need of rescuing, as has been discussed in chapter four.

The negative impact of the *zenana* upon the Indian women who lived within them, was utilised by the missionary women as another reason that justified their access and attempted reform of the *zenana*, therefore presenting their missionary work as emancipatory for Indian women. The New Zealand missionary women saw the Indian custom of the extended family living in one house to be detrimental to Indian women, as it did not allow Indian women to achieve an elevated status as lady of the house, as wife and mother, which was regarded as the epitome of true womanhood in English speaking countries. Alice Henderson in an article for *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* explains how in her view the "joint family system" is responsible for the

subordinate and degraded position of women...[since] the conditions in which she will find herself are somewhat akin to slavery. The joint family system is not calculated to engender either peace or happiness in the family; jealousy, hatred, discord and deceit rule, family feuds and litigations are of frequent occurrence, and women are the ones who are most strongly affected by these things.¹⁰⁷

Alice Henderson contrasts this opinion with the emancipatory vision of womanhood in New Zealand which, she argues, allows married women "an honoured place at the head of a new home, where she will be surrounded by all that call forth the best that is in

¹⁰⁶ Emma Beckingsale Diaries – "Brahmanbaria", July 26th 1896 (CBC)

¹⁰⁷ A. E. Henderson, "The Place of Women in the Hindu Religion", *The P.W.M.U Harvest Field*, (23), June 1910, p.iv

her".¹⁰⁸ Therefore the New Zealand missionary women, despite their status as single women, presented the role of motherhood as the feminine ideal. By undertaking the role as mothers and wives at the head of a British style family in an Anglicised domestic setting, Indian women would be set free from their degrading 'heathen' lives.

By utilising the rhetoric of reform and its images of cleanliness and dirt, the New Zealand missionary women presented a negative image of the *zenana* which justified the missionary women's access to, and attempts to reform, Indian domestic space. *Zenanas* were presented by New Zealand missionary women as dirty and dark, confining and damaging to the health of the Indian women who were 'forced' to live there. The *zenana* was presented as a restrictive space for Indian women both physically and intellectually. Missionary writings on the *zenanas* portrayed them as dark, small and enclosed spaces, reflecting similar discourses on the *zenana* in wider missionary and imperial literature.¹⁰⁹ In the New Zealand Baptist journal *The Missionary Messenger* describes the "curtains of the secluded zenanas"¹¹⁰ and "prison like zenanas".¹¹¹ The missionary women emphasised the way in which *zenana* life prevented Indian women from participating in activities and undertaking tasks that New Zealand women took for granted. Rosalie MacGeorge explained to the missionary supporters in New Zealand that Indian women needed pictures of familiar activities and objects in order to understand everyday life because they could not venture outside their own homes.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Burton, 1992, p.146

¹¹⁰ "Second Annual Report", *The Missionary Messenger*, (9), December 1887, p.2

¹¹¹ "Miss MacGeorge's Departure – The Valedictory Address", *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1886, p.174

¹¹² R. MacGeorge, "Letter to the Children from Miss MacGeorge", *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1887, p.78

The New Zealand missionary women also believed that the restrictions of *zenana* life impacted on the physical, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of Indian women. The relationship between the physical surroundings and the health of the individual is evident in an article in *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field* which describes the “cramped lives and enfeebled constitutions”¹¹³ of Indian women. The missionaries also saw Indian women’s minds and intelligence as reflective of the restrictive nature of the *zenana*. Helen MacGregor in her report to the FMC in 1908 informed the committee of the “ignorance” of Indian women with their minds “closed to new impressions”.¹¹⁴ The New Zealand Baptist journal *The Missionary Messenger* also presented the *zenana* as an obstacle to the cultivation of Indian women’s minds. Instead of education and freedom which were purportedly the rights of women in the West, Indian women “perish[ed] for the lack of knowledge”¹¹⁵ and were encased in a “dense cloud of ignorance that enshrouds [their] minds”.¹¹⁶ In order to overcome the “ignorance” of Indian women, the missionaries needed to gain access to the *zenana* and reform Indian domestic space through conversion of its inhabitants to Christianity and ‘conversion’ to British concepts of femininity and womanhood.

The missionary women believed that the *zenanas* promoted idleness among Indian women, which the missionary women believed was detrimental to their proper role as good mothers and wives. The missionary work the New Zealand women undertook was

¹¹³ “India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (19), December 1908, p.vii

¹¹⁴ “Appendix VIA – Foreign Missionaries’ Report – India – Miss MacGregor’s Report”, *PGA – Dunedin*, November 1908, p.103

¹¹⁵ “Second Annual Report”, *The Missionary Messenger*, (9), December 1887, p.2

thus designed to combat both the perceived ignorance of Indian women and their perceived idleness. The missionary women in their *zenana* visits taught reading and writing through bible stories and hymns, which were also seen as beneficial to Indian women because of their Christian messages. There was also concern by the missionary women that Indian women should have a means of providing for themselves and allowing themselves some financial independence from their husbands.¹¹⁷ It was also seen as important to provide Indian women who became widows with a means of support, as many were usually unable to support themselves after the deaths of their husbands. The missionary women realised however, that *zenana* seclusion prevented many Indian women from entering the public workspace and therefore, along with the attempts to reform the Indian domestic space, work deemed suitable to British ideals of femininity and able to be done in the home was needed.¹¹⁸ The missionaries therefore set up industrial schools which taught skills such as lace making that could be turned into a home cottage industry.¹¹⁹ Edith Giesen's Annual Report in 1907 outlined the aims of the industrial school in Madras as to provide the girls with "employment and a means of supporting themselves" and described the school routine as "work [at sewing] for seven hours each day except Saturday, and in most instances enjoy it."¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ "Third Annual Report", *The Missionary Messenger*, (15), December 1888, p.2

¹¹⁷ The financial independence of women within marriage was an issue of debate and contention in feminist circles in New Zealand during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with support from prominent feminists such as Kate Sheppard and Margaret Sievwright. J. Devaliant, *A Biography – Kate Sheppard – The Fight for Women's Votes in New Zealand – The life of the women who led the struggle*, (Auckland, Penguin Books, 1992), p.153

¹¹⁸ C. Henderson, "With the Mission in Madras", *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (7), September 1907, p.iii

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ "Appendix VIa - Foreign Missionaries' Report – India – Miss Giesen's Report", *PGA – Dunedin*, November 1907, p.103

There was however some degree of class difference in the education and work the missionary women promoted for Indian women. Village and lower caste women were seen by the missionary women as “simple village folk”¹²¹ and not as intelligent as *zenana* women.¹²² Girls from these groups were more likely to be encouraged to attend industrial schools, despite the acknowledgement by some missionary women that poor village women had more freedom and were thus able to lead better lives than their ‘sisters’ in the *zenanas*.¹²³ The education of either wealthy or high caste Indian women was focused instead on their future importance to the further reform and conversion of India. For Indian girls from higher caste or wealthy families greater emphasis was placed on academic study, especially education that trained the girls for work as teachers and nurses in an attempt to make them the future “earnest workers for God”.¹²⁴ Hence, attempts at reform and education by the missionary women differed depending on class.

As with public space and missionary education, class also impacted on the way in which missionary women used the rhetoric of dirt and disease to describe Indian domestic space. In some of their writings a number of the missionary women did make some distinctions between Indian domestic spaces on the basis of class. However, these distinctions were rare and often made in private writings rather than journal articles or letters and thus often appear to contradict the missionary’s own more public writings which tended to generalise Indian domestic space. What is apparent is that when Indian

¹²¹“Appendix VIIa – Foreign Missionaries’ Report – Miss Giesen’s Report for 1909”, *PGA – Christchurch*, October 1909, p.118

¹²² “Miss Bacon”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1893, p.139

¹²³“Letter from Miss Peters”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, November 1895, p.171

¹²⁴ U. Saunders, “The Influence of India’s Educated Women”, *The Outlook – A Christian Weekly for the Home*, XI (6), March 6th 1904, p.16

domestic space was described in terms other than those of dirt and disease, as for public space, it was in association with higher class Indians, those who were seen as embodying British notions and ideas of respectability and domesticity. In her account of a visit to Jodali's house, an Indian mission worker, Emma Beckingsale notes: "His people are very decent. They are clean and have a respectable house and his wife is a pretty, delicate looking woman."¹²⁵ Emma makes the reformers' link between the state of the house and the moral character of the inhabitants. The women of Jodali's family are used as a metaphor for the state of the family's morality. This reflects the wider missionary and imperial trend towards regarding women as the gauge for the moral state of the country as a whole. The link between the state of the Indian domestic space and the women who occupy it is also seen in the contrasting visit of Emma Beckingsale to the house of the missionary station's cook. The cook held a lower position on the mission staff hierarchy than Jodali. In her description of the visit, Emma Beckingsale describes how there were "such dirty ragged women and [in a] broken down house".¹²⁶ The link between wealth and class and cleanliness is also evident in another diary entry from Emma Beckingsale recalling a visit to the *zenana* of a local *zamindar*. Despite this being a true *zenana* where the women were restricted to this section of a large house, she describes it as having clean mats and curtains, white painted walls, wreaths of flowers, bright pictures and photographs.¹²⁷

It is evident that class was a meditating factor in the portrayal of Indian domestic space. The missionary women often conflated the concepts of class and caste and while there is

¹²⁵ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria and Barisal", January 25th 1896 (CBC)

¹²⁶ Ibid

some overlap between caste status and material wealth, *shudra* agricultural workers are likely to be poorer than higher caste *vaishyas* who work as merchants. This showed that wealth and caste status did not equate as precisely as the missionary women presented. In India, caste represents a religious hierarchy based on ritual purity rather than status derived from material wealth as represented in class. Lower caste or poor houses were however more likely to be described as dirty, and New Zealand missionary women were inclined to present wealthy or upper caste space as an exotic environment. This difference in depiction between upper and lower class/caste domestic space demonstrates again the way in which imperial ideas concerning race were also influenced by class identities and stereotypes.

While missionaries tried to maintain a distinction in their writings between the polluting space of Indian homes and temples and the purity of Christian space, they were forced to manoeuvre between them in order to attempt the rescue and conversion of Indian women. Thus, the *zenana* took on an important role in the missionary discourse, as the contact zone in which Christianity physically encountered 'Heathenism'. The missionaries also became the means by which these spaces were conveyed to and opened up for inspection by white middle class women in the missionary societies of New Zealand, thus transferring the intimate Indian space from the private sphere to the public. The missionary women constructed the *zenana* as a private and enclosed space while also maintaining their right to access it and to report on it to a wider audience at home, thus supporting their missionary goals.

¹²⁷ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Chandpur", October 10th 1898 (CBC)

Constructing spaces in the cultural contact zone¹²⁸ was not a one-way process. Instead, both sides negotiated where the boundaries lay. Boundaries varied within the cultural contact zone and were fluid, flexible and differed between individuals and groups. Even though these boundaries proved fluid and *zenanas* proved accessible for the missionary women, they persisted in constructing them as enclosed spaces to justify their own continued work. The agency of the Indian community in the cultural contact with the missionary women is evident in the negotiation that occurred regarding missionary access to Indian domestic spaces. It was Indian resistance to male missionaries entering their homes that had provided the opportunity for female missionaries to undertake work in India, as it created a niche in which only they could work.¹²⁹ However, missionary women were not given free access to domestic spaces and the New Zealand women missionaries found that access to Indian spaces was in some cases restricted.

It is obvious from the diary of Emma Beckingsale that the missionary women did not anticipate or understand this resistance to their attempts to talk to Indian women within the *zenanas*. Emma describes the incident of her refusal of entry into one house. "They then got rude and order [sic] me away. I asked them their authority...I did not quite believe him but as there was no help for it I said that if I was not wanted I would not come of course".¹³⁰ It is difficult to assess the reasons and motivations of the sections of the Indian communities that restricted missionary access to their homes as their voices are lost to the historian except through the missionary sources. What is discernible is that what resistance there was to missionary *zenana* visits was more an objection to the

¹²⁸ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes – Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (Routledge, London, 1992), p.6

¹²⁹ Fitzgerald, p.176

motives of the missionaries and their wish to convert them rather than to the idea of allowing foreign missionary women access to Indian homes. This is evident in the description of another visit to a *zenana* as related by Emma in her diary: "He begged me to sit down and assured me that they were all pleased to see me and liked me talking to the women but I must not talk religion."¹³¹ Hence it appears that Indians did not draw boundaries around domestic space along racial lines but instead constructed boundaries as a protection for religious space and established religious tradition. Building on the idea of the oppressive patriarchal nature of Hinduism, as discussed in chapter four, it is Indian men who are portrayed as resistant to the New Zealand missionary women accessing their family's domestic space and hence the women of the family.

Another obstacle to the missionary women's free access to Indian domestic space was the Indian association of missionaries with the colonial government structure. While missionaries made the distinction between different classes of Europeans within India, it is evident that not all Indians recognised or understood these differentiations within European society. This is not surprising as missionaries freely interacted with local colonial officials and wore similar dress, spoke English and constructed European inspired houses. Emma Beckingsale went to the boat races at the invitation of the local colonial magistrate and was bemused at the reaction of Indians who could not decipher the intricacies of colonial European society: "the people here are greatly puzzled, [sic] They think that all white people are Christians!"¹³² This confusion about who the missionaries were working for, their links with the colonial government and their

¹³⁰ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "First steps at Chandpur", January 15th 1898 (CBC)

¹³¹ Ibid.

motivations also added to the caution in permitting missionaries to cross the boundaries into Indian domestic space. There was a fear among some Indians that missionaries were agents of the colonial government whose aim was the collection of taxes or gathering population information for the purposes of conscription.

While the missionaries identified distinctions between themselves and colonial officials, to remote Indian communities these distinctions were less obvious. Indian caution regarding access of white women into Indian domestic space resulted in missionary women who were seeking access to *zenanas* being questioned on their salaries and loyalties. Cultural differences in the polite etiquette for greeting strangers is also apparent in this example. While the missionary women found these questions impolite and invasive, this questioning was usual and acceptable to Indian communities.¹³³ However, while some of the Indian community maintained the borders of private Indian space by restricting access to foreigners, others showed that these boundaries were more flexible. Missionary women were welcomed into the homes of many local Indian families, though what was considered acceptable behaviour within this encounter varied between the missionaries and the Indian women.

The image generated by New Zealand missionary women, of Indian women as childlike, links with the missionary women's' idea of their role as a maternal teacher figure within the cultural encounters that took place inside the *zenanas*. The role of the maternal missionary was presented in the international missionary literature as a model for New

¹³² Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria", August 23rd 1896 (CBC)

¹³³ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "First steps at Chandpur", December 16th 1897 (CBC)

Zealand missionary women to follow in their *zenana* encounters with Indian women. This idealised vision of the maternal missionary and the childlike Indian woman is evident in the *Gleaner Pictorial Album* of 1888 in a picture entitled: "Teaching in a Zenana at Amritsar". In this image the missionary lady appears as the largest figure in the picture, encircled with light sitting on a stool with the Indian women crouched in shadows huddled at her feet.¹³⁴ This missionary ideal of the maternal-child relationship, constructed Indian women as passive recipients of missionary women's knowledge, a one way process in which Indian women were expected to listen and learn in order to improve their lives by converting to Christianity, and thus coming into the light. It is evident from their diaries and other writings that the New Zealand missionary women were genuinely shocked when the *zenana* visits did not conform to this ideal and instead participated in and constructed the cultural encounters with the missionaries in the *zenanas* in their own ways and on their own terms. The missionary women expected Indian women to sit and listen to the hymns and gospel readings and act as passive students. However, Indian women negotiated these encounters differently. They enjoyed the singing but continued to talk and engage with one another, doing other things, preparing stuff for market, tending to noisy children and interacting with male family members who wandered in and out. This was seen as lack of attention by the missionary women, however it can also be read as the Indian women's wish to participate in and define the encounter on their terms. This is evident in a visit to a *zenana* as retold in Emma Beckingsale's diary:

¹³⁴ Image reproduced in J. Morawiecki, "The Peculiar Mission of Christian Womanhood": The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society 1880-1920," (PhD, University of Sussex, 1998), p.126

From there I went to two houses by the river, but though a good many women collected they simply would not listen. Whether I sang or spoke they interrupted & were most persistent they screamed at me until I stopped my hymn or 'sermon' & answered their questions.¹³⁵

It is apparent that the missionary women and Indian women held different expectations of their cultural encounter. While the missionary women considered the encounter an earnest attempt at reform and a serious matter of 'saving souls', the Indian women often saw the encounters in a different light. To many of the Indian women the missionaries were sights of curiosity and the biblical stories and hymns provided entertainment. However, the missionaries interpreted the Indian women's reactions as childlike and attributed them to their ignorance, which further justified their mission of rescue.

The New Zealand women missionaries' ideas about landscape and space were formed by preconceived ideas concerning the nature of the Indian environment. While the language of Romanticism and Orientalism was drawn upon to construct an idyllic rural landscape and to engage the imagination of the home audiences, Indian urban space was described by reference to images of dirt and disease. The image portrayed in the public missionary literature of Indian homes was of a constricted and confined space that prevented contact with the outside world and the larger community. However, it is apparent from the missionaries' more private writings that the Indian homes the missionary women were granted access to did not all conform to this image, and were determined by class and caste. Indian domestic spaces were thus more fluid than the missionary women portrayed, with visitors coming and going to look at and hear the missionary visitors.

¹³⁵ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "First Steps at Chandpur", December 16th 1897 (CBC)

CHAPTER SIX

DRESSING UP: CLOTHING, IDENTITY AND FEMININITY

Through their dress the missionary women reinforced and maintained their identity as white women missionaries, maintaining the rules of dress that were suitably feminine in New Zealand, and thereby maintaining the image of respectable and ideal European womanhood. This chapter will analyse the way in which the ideas of cleanliness and femininity, which were influenced by the missionary ideas of reform, were important in the construction of the missionary version of India, by considering the concepts of dress and bodies. New Zealand missionary women's impressions of Indian dress were also influenced by ideas from Romanticism and Exoticism, which were evident in the previous chapter's consideration of the construction of Indian landscapes.

Historians have often neglected the concepts of clothes and beauty when writing about the experience of culture contact. The historiography of dress reveals a focus on providing a timeline of fashion, rather than investigating the way in which ordinary dress is representative of gendered and cultural identity. Scholars of anthropology have focused on the importance of dress and its cross cultural impacts most notably in the volume edited by Ruth Barnes and Joanne Eicher which considers the intersection of gender and dress in different cultural settings and across cultures.¹ The study of dress in the Indian context has been anthropological and few view it across cultural boundaries or as a way of constructing or interpreting them.

By using Dress as an analytic concept, one can investigate the ways in which people and groups involved in cultural encounters created their own identities and those of others in the cultural contact experience. Specifically, these people and groups used personal outward appearances to create symbolic boundaries. While these boundaries were created through, discourses and ideologies brought by each party to the cultural contact experience, these boundaries were not static. Rather, they proved to be dynamic, allowing negotiation and dialogue between cultures. In the cultural contact experience between New Zealand missionary women and Indian women and communities, dress provided a way of differentiating the 'other' for both groups. In this construction of the 'other', the difference of dress embodied competing visions and idealisations of femininity and modesty.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the maintenance of British styles of dress by British imperialists when overseas was important in distinguishing and creating racial and social identities. Maintenance of identity through dress was especially important in the peripheries of empire where dress acted as an important cultural metaphor for British civilisation and cultural values. The maintenance of British dress by those living and working in the countries of the empire was a symbol of their belief in the superiority of European civilisation and progress. As Helen Callaway points out in the context of British imperialism the "discipline of dress was linked directly to the discipline of a moral code".²

¹ R. Barnes and J. B. Eicher, (eds.), *Dress and Gender – Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, (New York, Berg, 1992)

² H. Callaway, "Dressing for Dinner in the Bush – Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority", R. Barnes and J. Eicher (eds.) *Dress and Gender - Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, (New York, Berg, 1992), p.234

The New Zealand missionary women, like the British in most parts of the empire, maintained their New Zealand identity by continuing to wear New Zealand and hence British-style dress, despite it appearing less than suitable for Indian conditions. Photos of the missionary women show that they continued to wear the corseted dresses, skirts and blouses of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods that buttoned to the neck and reached to their ankles. Books written by British colonial wives and travellers such as Mrs Lyttleton's *How to Pack, How to Dress, How to keep Well on a Winter Tour of India (for Ladies)*, gave advice for female travellers on the appropriate attire for India and other tropical locations.³ In a similar advice book, Constance Larymore advised women to wear corsets despite the discomfort from the heat of tropical climates, and photographs show her in Edwardian gowns with high necks, long sleeves and hems that touched the ground.⁴ It is likely that some concessions were made to the Indian climate, such as using lighter cloth and fewer undergarments but in outward appearance, the missionary women proclaimed their distinctiveness from the Indian population, in particular the Indian women around them. British women's dress started to become less restrictive than the late Victorian and Edwardian dress styles during the 1910s and World War I intensified this trend.⁵ New Zealand missionary women in India in the early twentieth century followed these changing fashions and continued to abide by New Zealand gender conventions, and dressed according to the fashions at home in New Zealand. In her diary, Emma Beckingsale recounts with excitement the arrival of Lettie Ings and four other New Zealand missionaries with the new fashions they brought with them.⁶ The maintenance of British and New Zealand styles of dress signified the remembrance of identity and the continuation of British and colonial

³ Ibid., p.243

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ S. Coney (ed.), *Standing in the Sunshine*, (Auckland, Viking, 1993), p.157

⁶ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria – Calcutta – Comilla", December 29th 1896 (CBC)

beliefs about race and nationalism, gender and morality and social position. By continuing to wear British style clothes in India, New Zealand missionary women were part of a wider imperial trend that saw the strict maintenance of British identity as central to the preservation of the British Empire. Callaway has shown that British imperial women travellers continued to wear women's clothing consistent with contemporary British fashions because it maintained their feminine identity which had been questioned by their challenging of accepted gender roles through adventuring and touring.⁷ Thus, by continuing to wear British styles of dress the New Zealand women missionaries were confirming both their gender and their race identities.

As the central aim of missionary reform projects was to uphold Christian, and hence British, cultural values it was important, as exemplars to Indian society, to promote these values through the maintenance of dress. Since missionary women were expected to be exemplars of European civilisation in the 'heathen' environment of India, their clothing was central to their dual identity both as Europeans in India, and as reformers of the Indian culture and religion. With dress such an important element in the missionary women's identity, dress was also central to the way in which missionary women constructed and articulated a vision of India to their missionary audience in New Zealand. The way in which the New Zealand missionary women saw and understood Indian dress was influenced by the ideas of reform associated with the paradigms of cleanliness and the concepts of ideal femininity. The missionary women's writings on Indian dress were, like their images of the Indian landscape, also influenced by the rhetoric of exoticism. New Zealand missionary women constructed

⁷ Callaway, p.244

images of Indian dress in opposition to those of British dress, demonstrating India's lack of civilisation and progress and therefore the need to reform.

Most of the New Zealand missionary women continued to wear European style dress during their stay in India, although there is evidence that one of the New Zealand missionary women, Rosalie MacGeorge, wore aspects of Indian dress on certain occasions. When staying with the Australian Baptist Missionaries in Furreedpore, Bengal, Rosalie MacGeorge went to Christmas Dinner with the Australian missionary women at the local Indian preacher's house with a sari tied over the top of her dress.⁸ Additionally, in 1889 in a letter to Mr Driver the Secretary of the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society and later reprinted in *The New Zealand Baptist*, Rosalie MacGeorge describes how she walked around Nariangunge, a village in East Bengal, "wearing the native muslin dress over my usual one."⁹ She later comments that she dressed in this manner in order to enable her to mix and interact more freely with the Indian community, especially the women, and that this was understood and acknowledged by the women themselves.¹⁰ Rosalie MacGeorge's comments suggest that she was aware of the importance dress held as a tool for mediating and crossing between cultural boundaries. In putting on Indian clothes, Rosalie MacGeorge did not become Indian nor did it lessen her association with her New Zealand identity. However, Rosalie MacGeorge was aware that her New Zealand dress made a statement about her identity and intentions and this cultural cross-dressing provided a means of attempting to identify with Indian women. By dressing in Indian attire Rosalie MacGeorge was making a gesture that she wished to communicate across

⁸ R. MacGeorge, "Letters to the Children from Miss MacGeorge", *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

⁹ R. MacGeorge, "The Gospel in Other Lands", *The New Zealand Baptist*, January 1889, p.12

¹⁰ Ibid.

cultural barriers. Rosalie MacGeorge states that by wearing a sari to the Christmas dinner, she and the Australian missionary women wished to pay a compliment to the women of the house. According to Rosalie, the Indian women appreciated this and were "amused to see us appear with sarrees [sic] round our dresses and over our heads, and seemed to appreciate the compliment we meant to pay them."¹¹ In combining the dress and the sari, Rosalie MacGeorge and the Australian missionary women could exist on the boundaries between cultures. By dressing up in Indian dress they were blurring the line and allowing greater interaction between the missionaries and the Indian women. This did not necessarily change the perceptions either group had of the other. What is notable is that although Rosalie MacGeorge wore the sari over the top of her British style dress, she did not forgo her identity associations and respectable ideas of dress by doing away with her usual dress. The evidence also suggests that Rosalie was an exceptional case. While Rosalie MacGeorge highlights the possibility that there were isolated instances of missionary women taking steps to identify with Indian women through the medium of dress, there were definite limits as to the extent to which missionary women were willing to culturally cross-dress. Consequently New Zealand missionary women preferred to maintain their New Zealand styles of dress and in doing so, also maintain their New Zealand identities while in India.

Dress is a crucial part of negotiating social and cultural identities, as it is a visual representation of an individual or group's "moral and religious value system."¹² Therefore, in the cultural encounter between New Zealand missionary women and Indian women, dress could serve as a visual communication of each group's ideas and

¹¹ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

ideals about femininity and morality. Each group represented the other's dress in terms of their own cultural paradigms of femininity. As well as using dress to construct an image of the 'other', both groups sought to maintain their racial and gender identities through the preservation of their own dress styles. Both sides of the cultural encounter became influenced, directly or indirectly, by each other's ideals of femininity and morality as expressed through dress. In some cases, dress became a means by which cultural and racial boundaries could be challenged or negotiated.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to British and British settler women dress was a marker of femininity and morality. As Jane Malthus points out, the gender ideals of the Victorian era were firmly established in middle-class New Zealand by the 1880s.¹³ Women represented the family's position within society and the extent of a woman's conformity to fashionable dress represented the family's respectability and social standing.¹⁴ In the middle class gender ideas of the nineteenth century women were held to be the preservers of the home and race and expected to "guard the virtue, morality and gentility of the settlers".¹⁵ New Zealand women's dress of the nineteenth century with its "[t]ight fitting, strained bodices, and narrow, heavily draped skirts"¹⁶ which restricted the torso and legs and disguised the natural body shape¹⁷ reflected this desire for women to conform to the Victorian ideals of feminine conduct which was restrained and controlled. Women were to be "gentle, submissive, and dignified, setting the standards for familial and societal behaviour".¹⁸

¹² Barnes and Eicher, p.2

¹³ J. Malthus, " 'Bifurcated and Not Ashamed' Late Nineteenth-Century Dress Reformers in New Zealand", *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol.23, No.1, April 1989, p.33

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dalziel, "The Colonial Helpmeet: Women's Role and the Vote in Nineteenth Century New Zealand", *New Zealand Journal of History*, 11(2), October 1977, p.57

¹⁶ Malthus, 1989, p.34

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.33

After 1910, fashions for New Zealand women became less restrictive with less emphasis on the waistline, less drapery in the skirt and dresses which hung from the shoulders did not require such stayed undergarments. However, dress still highlighted gender ideals of respectability by covering women's bodies from neck to ankle and restricting movement. While dress differentiated between genders, it was not supposed to highlight women's sexuality. Women who challenged these gendered ideals and did not abide by conventional fashions choosing instead to wear 'rational dress', often breeches and no corsets, were ridiculed and their femininity called into question. Critics portrayed them as masculine and of loose morals. Breeches received particular criticism as they were seen as highly sexual as they showed the shape of women's legs.¹⁹ Dress reformers themselves highlighted instead the unhealthy nature of women's conventional fashions, in particular corsets and tight fitting clothing.²⁰ Thus, Victorian notions about women's dress thus clearly linked ideas about respectability and morality.

To Indian women, dress and ideas of morality and femininity were closely related to religious sanctions and concepts of purity and pollution. Religious texts and sanctions prescribed what was considered appropriate dress for Hindu women. While religious texts do not necessarily represent reality for all Hindu women, they provide insight into what was deemed desirable and what actions deserved censure or disapproval.²¹ The *Stridharmapaddahati* (Guide to the Religious Status and Duties of Women), was written by a court pundit from South India between 1720-1750 and contains a section

¹⁹ Seminar given by Dr Clare Simpson at the University of Canterbury, History Department, 2001

²⁰ Malthus, 1989, p.38

²¹ Julia Leslie, "The Significance of Dress for the Orthodox Hindu Women", Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (eds), *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, (New York, Berg, 1992), p.199

on the correct dress requirements for Hindu women.²² In this text, the correct dress for Hindu women is closely linked with their religious and social status. Models of femininity dictated that to be a good woman women should primarily be good wives and mothers. To do this they were required by religious texts to worship their husband as a God in order to fulfil their *dharma*. The proper arraignment of a respectable wife was expected to include:

A short bodice [*kañcuki*], the marriage necklace [*kanthasūtram*], a pair of earrings, collyrium,²³ glass bangles, anointing [sic] with tumeric [*haridrā*], and putting the sectarian mark [*pundraka*] on the forehead, arranging the hair, wearing ornaments on one's feet and nose, betel and so on...²⁴

Thus, clothing and dress identifies Hindu women in relation to their husband, by indicating whether they were single, married or widowed. Single and widowed women could not wear these markers of femininity. As a result, dress and ornamentation was the visual indication of conformity to ideals of femininity. Abiding by these prescriptions blessed a woman with good fortune and denoted her behaviour as "meritorious".²⁵ Ideals of femininity for Hindu women were also linked to religious notions of purity and pollution. In Hindu society, the "dress, its style, colour, and material, and the way the garment is worn – either hiding or showing parts of the body" indicated the purity or pollution of the wearer,²⁶ usually by denoting caste.

As we have seen, the New Zealand and the Indian communities held different ideas and beliefs about femininity and morality and the ways in which these values were

²² Ibid., p.198

²³ Collyrium is a dark coloured cosmetic and medical salve that is applied around the eyes for beautification, medicinal or religious reasons.

²⁴ *Strīdharmapaddahatī* (1989:100) as quoted in Leslie, p.204

²⁵ Ibid.

expressed in women's dress. New Zealand missionary women's comments about Indian women's dress were influenced by their British ideas of femininity. There is no surviving material on either any specific dress policy that the New Zealand women missionaries adopted or the individual beliefs they held as to whether Indian converts, as well as Indians in general, should fully adopt British style dress. Opinions in the wider missionary community were mixed as to the desirability of promoting British dress. Some missionaries feared that Indians who adopted British clothes without the corresponding values and religion undermined the missionary endeavour and that it was unwise to allow Indians to become as civilised as Britons.²⁷ The missionary women were therefore required to undertake a balancing act. New Zealand missionary women were expected to promote the civilisation of Indians through the elevation of British ideas of femininity and respectability, especially in relation to coverage of the body and cleanliness. However New Zealand missionary women were also required to maintain distinct racial boundaries to maintain their superior identity as white women, becoming exemplars of European civilisation, and therefore able to enact the rescue of Indian women.

In the Victorian ideologies it was considered necessary for women to use clothes to cover their bodies to protect their morality and respectability. While evening dresses of this period often bared the shoulders, during the day dresses had high necklines with high boned or wired collars,²⁸ sleeves were generally wrist length²⁹ and hemlines

²⁶ O. P. Joshi, "Continuity and Change in Hindu Women's Dress", R. Barnes and J. Eicher, *Dress and Gender*, (New York, Berg, 1992), p.214

²⁷ E. Tarlo, *Clothing Matters – Dress and Identity in India*, (London, Hurst and Company, 1996), p.39

²⁸ J. Malthus, "European Women's Dresses in Nineteenth Century New Zealand", (PhD, University of Otago, 1996), p.228

²⁹ Ibid., p.264

sat just below the ankles.³⁰ However Indian dress represented different beliefs concerning the covering of the female body. The missionary women commented on the revealing dress of the Indian girls with their bare feet, bare arms and no hats.³¹ For British women in India, covering the body with clothes was an important way of conforming to the gendered ideals of dignity and respectability.

The draped style of Indian clothing, especially the sari of Indian women, was an obvious point of difference from the tailored style of European clothing. This difference represented the distinct ways in which Indian and European missionary communities saw femininity represented in dress. To the Indian communities, draped clothing highlighted a woman's religious purity, while to the missionaries it was seen as an inferior style of clothing and 'disgraceful' in the 'nakedness' it allowed.³² Rosalie MacGeorge compared Bengali women's dress to European dress: "[t]he Bengali dress needs no sewing, and as shoes or stockings are rarely worn there are no holes to mend in the latter."³³ While to Rosalie the difference was merely seen in terms of the amount of mending or sewing required, to Indian women this point held more significance. In Hindu belief there was an important distinction between stitched and unstitched clothing,³⁴ unstitched garments being seen as purer because they involve less human handling than stitched or tailored clothes. Rosalie remarks how her Bengali friend Mookta was "astonished to see how much sewing English people need."³⁵ The missionary women's clothing thus placed missionary women

³⁰ Ibid., p.228

³¹ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

³² E. Tarlo, *Clothing Matters - Dress and Identity in India*, (London, Hurst and Company, 1996), pp.33-34

³³ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1887, p.78

³⁴ Joshi, p.214

³⁵ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, May 1887, p.78



FISHER FOLK.

Figure One: Fisher Folk

Source: H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*, (Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1906), Courtesy of PCANZ

apart from Indian women. The British style clothing created a boundary because of its impure status through its heavy use of tailoring. Consequently, the difference between draped and stitched clothing was one way in which dress represented competing ideas of femininity. To Indian women, stitched clothing represented impurity, while to New Zealand missionary women draped clothing highlighted the necessity to reform Indian dress due to the 'primitiveness' and the 'nakedness' that draped clothing represented to them.

British reactions to Indian dress included what they saw as Indian 'undress'. Different attitudes to the way dress should cover the body also added to the missionary construction of Indian dress styles as 'primitive' and in need of reform. The New Zealand missionary women and the Indian communities in which they lived and worked both held very different ideas about how the human body was to be clothed, especially in relation to what should be covered up and why. In Indian society the way a garment is worn, and the parts of the body it hides or covers, is an indication of the person's position in society and is dictated by custom and religious principles.³⁶ In general however, Europeans in India disapproved of what they saw as the 'nakedness' of Indian dress. Bernard Cohn has described how one of the first images of India for the British was of the boatmen and fishermen they saw in the harbours on their arrival. What was normal and acceptable wear for these men, most often a *dhoti*, a draped cloth folded between their legs and usually coming down to their knees, was seen by the new arrivals as nakedness.³⁷ On her arrival in Colombo, Rosalie MacGeorge noticed the nakedness of the Cingalese boatmen, and while she called

³⁶ Joshi, p.214

³⁷ B. S. Cohn, "Cloth, Clothes and Colonialism: India in the Nineteenth Century", in A. B. Weiner and J. Schneider, (eds.), *Cloth and Human Experience*, (Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), p.331

their folded costumes "picturesque" she did not consider them "graceful".³⁸ Elise Browne on arrival in Bombay similarly described the crowd around her: "some were dressed & some scarcely clad at all."³⁹

The lack of coverage of the body that Indian clothing provided was contrary to European ideas of propriety and femininity. Because of this the missionary women constructed Indian dress as evidence of the need for Christian reform in India. In the missionary pamphlet *Our Missionaries in India* a picture [Figure One] shows Indian fishermen's wives not wearing blouses, *cholis*, under their saris. These Indian women are portrayed as untidy, pathetic and symbolic of all the women of India that require rescuing by Western and Christian women. This example comments on both the poverty of the women in the picture but also implies that their lack of femininity and respectability as seen in their unkempt and incomplete style of dress, is linked to their class. The comment corresponding to this photo in the pamphlet describes the scene of the fishermen's wives waiting on the beach, with their houses "thatched with palmyra leaves...where whole families live" in the background, as a "pathetic picture". As a result the pamphlet asks: "Cannot we too, hear across the ocean the voice of helplessness and hopelessness calling. 'Come over and save us?'" This example comments on both the poverty of the women in the picture but also implies that their lack of femininity and respectability as seen in their unkempt and incomplete style of dress is linked to their class.

³⁸ R. MacGeorge, "Letter from Miss MacGeorge to the Sunday-School Children", *The New Zealand Baptist*, February 1887, p.23

³⁹ Elise Browne Diary, "Reminiscences of Nursing Career in India – 1918-[ca.1923], MS Copy Micro 228, 'Leaving Bombay', January 3rd 1918, p.10

The missionary women used rhetoric to describe the veils and *burkhas* of Indian women, similar to that used to describe the *zenanas*. New Zealand missionary women extended the belief that Indian space was restrictive and prohibitive to Indian women into their constructions of Indian dress, perpetuating the image of Indian women as victims in need of rescue. With the *zenana* constructed in missionary rhetoric as a prison for Indian women, clothing such as veils and *burkhas* were also portrayed in this way, again casting women as victims of Indian culture and religion. Rosalie MacGeorge describes how one girl she visits in Furreedpore was confined to the house and required to cover her face in the presence of her fourteen-year-old husband. Rosalie MacGeorge highlights the dissatisfaction of the girl with her life by writing that she often notices that the girl has been crying.⁴⁰ To Rosalie, the veil represents the seclusion of the girl, the motif of the destruction of happy childhood innocence by Indian culture and religion.

While to the New Zealand missionary women veils and *burkhas* represented the restriction of Indian females' potential to be virtuous women and exemplary mothers, to Indian women the veil represented something more complex. While the idea of veiling the face displayed the difference between Indian and British ideas of feminine morality, veiling (*laaj*) is designed to protect Indian women from the polluting or dangerous public gaze, especially of men. Thus, covering their faces in public allowed Indian women to extend the protection of their private sphere into the public world and enabled them to access the world beyond their homes by becoming "socially invisible".⁴¹

⁴⁰ R. MacGeorge, "Miss MacGeorge's Letter", *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1887, p.135

⁴¹ Tarlo, p.160 & 199. For a discussion of the importance of veiling in creating concepts of space for women in India and the Muslim world in the modern world and see F. El Guindi, *Veil – Modesty*,



SELLING RICE-CAKES.

Figure Two:

Source:

Selling Rice Cakes

H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*,
(Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New
Zealand, 1906), Courtesy of PCANZ

In keeping with the rhetoric of rescuing and the ideologies of reform, the New Zealand missionary women used clothing and issues of dress to construct Indian women as victims and hence justify the attempted rescue of Indian women. The discourses of cleanliness and hygiene used to construct the missionary ideas of space were also applied by the missionary women to their descriptions of Indian dress. Just as 'dirty' and 'unhygienic' spaces were symbolic of the inhabitants of these spaces, so too clothing was constructed as dirty and unclean at the times when missionary women wished to comment on the morality of its wearer. Emma Beckingsale describes a group of children at a school in Bengal as "such a beautiful lot in dirty shabby garments & uncombed hair & unwashed faces."⁴² While the children are described as "beautiful", highlighting the image of childhood innocence, the children's clothing compromises this image of innocence and beauty. By referring to British ideas of grooming and hygiene, Emma implies that the group of children are in need of rescue. The motif of destruction, the image that the Indian world destroys innocence and beauty, especially of Indian children and women, through its dirt and disease, is also evident in Emma's description of a devotee after pilgrimage. She writes in her diary that "Lily came home from the Pootollah[sic] school this week with the news that our pretty little girls'[sic] mother has been on this recent pilgrimage & has come home with her head shaved & a bad cold in her eye."⁴³ Again, the Indian woman is described as "pretty" but it is the Hindu religious festival that undermines this. The shaved head of the woman is unfeminine and contrasted with the prettiness of her daughter. The pilgrimage is also seen as making the women sick, thus again linking disease and Indian space.

Privacy and Resistance, (Oxford, Berg, 1999) and A. J. Secor, "The veil and urban space in Istanbul: Women's Dress, Mobility and Islamic knowledge", *Gender, Place and Culture*, 9 (1), March 2002

⁴² Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria", July 26th 1896 (CBC)

⁴³ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria and Barisal", February 21st 1896 (CBC)

A photograph from the pamphlet *Our Missionaries in India* [Figure Two] showing a girl selling rice cakes is designed to highlight the depravity of India and therefore provide 'evidence' of the need for reform through Christianity. This photo also draws on the destruction motif. While the girl in the picture is smiling, the emphasis in the text is on the "burden" of her work and the unchildlike and unfeminine behaviour it enforces such as "soliciting custom and recommending her wares". Her position is represented through her clothing, her dishevelled hair, uncovered waist, arms and legs and her lack of shoes. Through the use of the biblical passage "Suffer the little children to come unto me"⁴⁴ the pamphlet ties the girls potential rescue and reform to the power of Christ, and through this, legitimates the missionary work of the New Zealand women.

The missionaries' belief that Indian women were victimised by the Hindu religion is represented in the missionaries' descriptions of Indian clothing. New Zealand missionary women used clothing to reflect the spiritual and civilised state of the wearer. This is seen in Emma's meeting with a holy woman whom she describes as a "dirty repulsive figure" with "matted hair". To Emma the woman's link to the Hindu religion as an ascetic, makes her unfeminine and demonstrates her lack of cleanliness. Emma goes on to say: "We tell her of the holiness of God, and illustrated by comparing the white and spotless sari of our Bible women with her worn discoloured cloth."⁴⁵ New Zealand missionary women used descriptions of clothing to portray Indian women as victims of their religion and culture by representing it as dirty and uncivilised, thereby perpetuating the need for missionary women to attempt the rescue of their Indian 'sisters'. British space and influence is what rescues Indian girls and

⁴⁴ H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*, (Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1906),



MISS HENDERSON AND STAFF.

Figure Three: Miss Henderson and Staff
Source: H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*,
(Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New
Zealand, 1906), Courtesy of PCANZ

women from the Indian environment and religions and this is reflected in the way the schoolgirls are described. For example, Emma Beckingsale describes the girls at a Christian school in Bengal as “so nice and neat in their print skirts – bright coloured jackets and white saris.”⁴⁶

Unfortunately the surviving evidence gives little idea of the extent to which Indian women took up Western dress and their motivations and reasons for doing so. It is hard therefore to assess the impact missionary attempts to reform Indian dress had, or the extent to which European notions of femininity changed or were incorporated into Indian ideas of dress. There is some evidence that the New Zealand missionary women attempted to influence dress within Indian communities. The missionaries gave out items of European clothing to children, particularly at Christmas. Boxes of toys and supplies were sent from New Zealand for the missionary women to distribute and use in their work and these boxes often contained jackets for the boys and dresses and blouses for the girls. Lettie Ings tells how the jackets given out to pupils by the New Zealand Baptist Missionaries at Christmas in Brahmanbaria were in high demand and how Indian women approached them on their village visits asking if they too could have jackets.⁴⁷ Bundles of material were also sent in the boxes to be made up into clothing by the girls in the sewing classes at the mission schools.

An example of change that did occur as a result of European ideas of femininity was the reduction in Gujarat of the use of the *kapdu*, a backless bodice designed to keep the wearer cool. However Victorian ideas of modesty that required women's backs to

p.38

⁴⁵ E. Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, (Dunedin, New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society, 1912), pp.20-

⁴⁶ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, “Aden to Calcutta”, December 25th 1895 (CBC)

⁴⁷ L. Ings, “Christmas at Brahmanbaria”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 1897, p.44

be covered, and the idea that an uncovered back was “naked and indecent”, were influential and led to Indian women of the area wearing the more Europeanised *choli*.⁴⁸ In the photos in the Presbyterian pamphlet *Our Missionaries in India* [Figure Three] it is evident that some Indian women associated with the mission, either as mission, hospital or school workers did take to wearing European dress. In a photo of Miss Henderson and the staff of the Established Church of Scotland’s Madras boarding school, two of the Indian women staff members are shown wearing British dress. It is impossible to tell whether these women ‘dressed up’ for the occasion or whether they adopted Western clothing on a more permanent basis. However, it does suggest that at least a few Indian women were influenced by the missionaries’ ideas about femininity and chose to express their association with the missionary world by wearing British style clothes. It is possible that these were Indian Christian converts and the appropriation of Western dress was a means of casting off their old identity for a new one. The anthropologist Emma Tarlo suggests that dress and especially ‘re-dress’ can be a way of choosing “alternative images”.⁴⁹ From the evidence, it seems unlikely that missionary women demanded or expected teachers and missionary workers to give up Indian dress in favour of Western dress. Photographs of staff both at schools and hospitals show Indian women continuing to wear Indian dress⁵⁰ and Emma Beckingsale describes her bible women as wearing saris.⁵¹ There were also many barriers to the appropriation of British clothes by Indian women. British style dress was impractical for everyday Indian life; for example it was not suitable attire for constantly sitting on the floor. British style dress was restrictive in everyday

⁴⁸ Tarlo, p.195

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.1

⁵⁰ Photos, “Miss Henderson with school staff”, p.9, “Lacemaking in Chingleput Boarding School”, p.11 and “Miss MacGregor and Staff”, p.29 all in *Our Missionaries in India*, and “Bible Women”, E. Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, frontispiece

⁵¹ E.Beckingsale, *Gold of Tipperah*, p.21

activities, unsuitable for the climate and difficult and expensive to acquire.⁵² In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Indian women were more likely to add British accessories such as shoes, blouses and jackets to their Indian dress than to adopt full British style dress, which was still regarded as too considerable a violation of Indian ideas of femininity and modesty.⁵³ Moreover, as Tarlo demonstrates, while Indians themselves recognised the symbolism of British clothing as 'civilised' and associated with the privileged elite, they rarely thought that British style clothing was beautiful.⁵⁴

As well as reacting to Indian dress in relation to concepts of reform, New Zealand missionary women also utilised the concepts of exoticism in constructing images of Indian dress. Class distinctions are evident in the way that the missionary women portrayed Indian dress. It was more likely that poor and village Indian dress was reported in the context of reform ideas of restrictiveness, cleanliness and primitiveness. A distinction is apparent between the reporting on the dress of village women, of which the missionary women were disparaging, and the delight and appreciation with which they recounted the dress and garments of wealthy Indians. Emma Beckingsale describes the attire of village children near Darjeeling as "a shapeless mass of rags of many colours, tied at various points with pieces of string",⁵⁵ emphasising the apparent poverty of the children by dismissing locally distinct clothing as urchin-like. However, the dress of wealthy Indians and those who are considered more Anglicised are more likely to be described in terms of the exotic.

⁵² Tarlo, p.44

⁵³ Ibid., p.46

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.44

⁵⁵ E. Beckingsale, "The Children of Darjeeling", *The New Zealand Baptist*, September 1896, p.140

It is evident that the missionary women found most Indian dress strange. Rosalie MacGeorge describes how the Indian girls “dress so queerly”,⁵⁶ while Annie Newcombe also highlights the ‘otherness’ of Indian attire in a description of Himalayan dress in which she tells her readers that they would be “amused and interested at some of the *queer* costumes that the people wear here.”⁵⁷ New Zealand missionary women used their comments about Indian women’s dress to highlight the way in which Indian dress did not conform to Western notions of femininity and respectability. It therefore constructs them as ‘other’. Indian dress was also a site/sight of curiosity for the home audiences. Pictures and photographs portraying Indian dress were provided for the missionary supporters back home through pamphlets and Sunday school leaflets. Missionaries also brought home examples of Indian dress to show to audiences at their furlough lectures. Miss Arnold,⁵⁸ presenting a furlough lecture in Auckland in 1892, illustrated her talk by having New Zealand children dress in Indian costume.⁵⁹

One way in which the missionary women represented Indian dress as picturesque and exotic was by highlighting the differences between Indian dress and that worn by themselves or home audiences, especially the Indian use of colour and jewellery. While lighter coloured clothes, especially white became popular for British women in India,⁶⁰ the emphasis on the bright and coloured nature of Indian dress highlighted its difference from the muted and simple British colours and thus increased its image as

⁵⁶ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

⁵⁷ my emphasis, A. Newcombe, “Letter from Miss Newcombe”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1888, p.121

⁵⁸ Miss Arnold was a missionary with the Australian Baptist Church, with whom the New Zealand Baptist Women Missionaries worked closely, and she gave a series of lectures in New Zealand on her furlough in 1892.

⁵⁹ E. Arnold, “Miss Arnold’s Report”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, July 1892, p.106

⁶⁰ Tarlo, p.31

exotic. In a study of the dresses of New Zealand women, the dresses from the decades surrounding the turn of the century are notable for their medium and dark coloured fabric. Most of the dresses were of black, brown or blue fabric.⁶¹ Synthetic dyes were still problematic and preferred fabrics of this period remained muted.⁶² These colours came to be associated with respectability.

In an article on India in the *P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, Alice Henderson describes the dress of India as “varied and beautiful...instinct [sic] with colour, stiff with gold, and sparkling with jewels.”⁶³ Here Alice Henderson, while acknowledging the variety, condenses Indian dress into the attire of the very wealthy to convey a sense of exoticism. In order to portray luxury and extravagance, Alice Henderson highlights the colour and expense of the fabrics and adornments worn. The variety of colours and brightness of the garments worn by Indian women was often commented on by New Zealand missionary women. Christine Henderson, visiting her sister Alice in Madras in 1907, commented on the procession to church on a Sunday of the school girls dressed in “bright cotton dresses” and the teachers in coloured saris of “purple, rose or green.”⁶⁴ Most of the missionary women spent their summers in India in the Himalayan retreats to escape the heat of the plains. In letters to *The New Zealand Baptist* both Annie Newcombe and Hopestill Pillow commented, on the use of colour in dress in the Himalayan foothills. Annie Newcombe wrote that in Darjeeling “[t]hey are very fond of colours, and put on the brightest they can get.”⁶⁵ Hopestill Pillow, also in Darjeeling noted that the people are “fond of bright colours: for instance, a

⁶¹ Malthus, 1996, p.230

⁶² Ibid., pp.29-30

⁶³ A. Henderson, “India”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (18), August 1909, p.i

⁶⁴ C. Henderson, “With the Mission in Madras”, *The P.W.M.U. Harvest Field*, (7), September 1907, p.iii

⁶⁵ A. Newcombe, “Letter from Miss Newcombe”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, August 1888, p.122

woman may have a red skirt and a blue jacket, and so on.”⁶⁶ The traditional dress from the Himalayas is noted for its use of colour in embroidery and woven woollen garments, while the fashions in New Zealand at the time provided a dramatic contrast.

In their letters home and in their diaries, the New Zealand missionary women often commented on the jewellery worn by the Indian women. The quantity and style of Indian jewellery was another way in which the ‘otherness’ of Indian dress was represented. It reflected the Orientalist discourses of exoticism and wealth, which fulfilled missionary supporters’ anticipated perceptions of India and engaged their imagination. The New Zealand missionary women commented both on the amount of jewellery that Indian girls and women wore and described the different and new types of jewellery they saw in India. Emma Beckingsale catalogues the jewellery worn by the wife of a local Deputy Magistrate’s accordingly:

a beautiful necklace - several twists of fine gold – so fine that it looked like silk or hair plaited – fastened in front by a beautiful large clasp of most exquisite workmanship. Her earrings were very large & some of her bracelets all gold, others gold & dark brown beads alternately. She wore a nose jewel – something like a button on a short pin pushed through the fleshy part of one nostril but no nose ring.⁶⁷

Emma is obviously impressed by the display of jewellery since she describes it in positive and admiring tones. The wealth and status of the wearer is emphasised, by focusing on the use of gold and “jewels” and the amount of jewellery worn. The exoticism of her jewellery is also noted. Items of jewellery, such as nose jewellery, which were unusual and different from the British and New Zealand types of jewellery, are described in detail.

⁶⁶ H. Pillow, “A Letter from Miss Pillow”, *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 1891, p.38

⁶⁷ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, “Brahmanbaria and Barisal”, February 8th 1896 (CBC)



TWO CASTE CHILDREN.

Figure Four:
Source:

Two Caste Children
H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*,
(Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New
Zealand, 1906), Courtesy of PCANZ

Rosalie MacGeorge and Annie Newcombe also illustrate the 'otherness' of Indian jewellery through its wealth and exoticism, in their descriptions of jewellery worn by Indian schoolgirls. Rosalie depicts the schoolgirls of Furreedpore in 1887 as:

Barefoot but with solid silver anklets clanking as they walk...with as many as a dozen bracelets on;...and ears loaded with silver or gold. They don't consider *one pair* of long earrings enough by any means. Some have a nose ring hanging from the front, and some have it at the side of one nostril.⁶⁸

In this extract, Rosalie's ideas of normal and accepted notions of femininity in relation to jewellery are disrupted. While the girls' bare feet represent poverty and primitiveness to the missionaries, the silver anklets that are worn contradict this image. Rosalie also emphasises the amount of jewellery the girls wear by her references to their being "loaded" with jewellery and comments on the numbers of bracelets and earrings. This statement implies that Rosalie sees the quantity of jewellery as excessive and therefore unnecessary, highlighting opposing ideas concerning the importance of jewellery in ideas of femininity between the two cultures. Rosalie fails to understand or articulate the significance of jewellery for Indian ideas of femininity and social status. Annie Newcombe reinforces Rosalie's description of the Furreedpore girls' jewellery, emphasising the amount worn as well as commenting on what she saw as discrepancies between apparent social status and the wearing of jewellery. She writes that: "They all wore plenty of jewellery; even the very poorest little girls had a necklace or bracelet."⁶⁹ There is an emphasis on the fact that these are "little Hindu girls".⁷⁰ It is evident that the missionary women are not used to associating lots of jewellery with children. However, the jewellery added to the beauty of the girls in the eyes of the missionaries who also described the girls'

⁶⁸ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

⁶⁹ A. Newcombe, "Letter from Miss Newcombe", *The New Zealand Baptist*, March 1888, p44

⁷⁰ Ibid.

“pretty faces and winning ways.”⁷¹ The jewellery in Indian dress was depicted by the missionary women as a sign of the exoticism of India and also represents the different frameworks that the New Zealand missionary women and the Indian community had for expressing concepts of femininity.

The link between the ideas of exoticism influenced by Orientalist and Romantic ideas, and the ideas of reform present in the rhetoric of rescuing, are evident in a photograph from the pamphlet *Our Missionaries in India*. The photograph titled “Two Caste Children” [Figure Four] emphasises the exotic nature of India through the clothing, jewellery and religious markings of the children. The photograph is reminiscent of anthropological texts of the time, which was an attempt to catalogue indigenous and colonial peoples. The text associated with this photograph, while acknowledging the children's intelligence and affection, draws attention to their “grave” expressions and links this to their caste and religion.⁷² Thus, it is the caste system and Hinduism that challenges the exotic and makes it negative, and which the missionary women must reform in order to rescue the children.

While the missionary women understood and represented Indian dress according to their frameworks of reform and exoticism, the cultural contact encounter was a two way process with the Indian communities also forming opinions about the missionary women based on their dress and attire. To the Indian women, the New Zealand missionary women were the ‘other’, their clothing differing from the accepted cultural prescriptions of femininity. Especially in remote villages, the missionary women were often the first white women that the Indian women had ever seen. Therefore, while the

⁷¹ MacGeorge, *The New Zealand Baptist*, April 1887, p.62

Indian women were under the imperial gaze of the missionaries, the missionaries themselves were under scrutiny as objects of curiosity. Emma Beckingsale's diary provides interesting examples of this encounter as she describes how Indian women were fascinated with the missionaries' clothes, hair and material possessions. During one village visit Emma describes being "surrounded by curious women and children wanting to see our watches and our hair, feeling our dresses."⁷³ While on the surface this presents missionary women as a site of curiosity, one must take into account that it is considered normal social practice in India to touch and discuss new clothes or clothes of new arrivals in order to "access its true desirability".⁷⁴ The process of discussing clothes also acts as a process by which visitors', or in this case the missionary women's, social status and position are assessed. A further example of the curiosity of Indian women towards the missionary women involves the missionary women's watches:

Then Lil took out her watch to see the time & there was great excitement. They must all see it & hear it tick & then search my belt to see if I had one & finding one wanted to know if it was the same & to hear it tick. It seems so strange to see quite old women acting as only little children do back home.⁷⁵

The novelty that these items apparently held for the Indian women is proof for Emma of their uneducated condition. She perceives their behaviour to be childlike because of their ignorance of what the missionaries regard as simple technologies, which they take for granted.

The bodies of the missionaries were also sites of inspection and curiosity by Indian women. In one account Emma is quite dismayed that what she takes to be engrossed

⁷² H. MacGregor, *Our Missionaries in India*, (Dunedin, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1906), p.12

⁷³ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria", August 4th 1896 (CBC)

⁷⁴ Tarlo, pp. 199 & 192

attention from an elderly Indian lady is actually inquisitiveness about her skin: "Their chief anxiety was how my mother made me so white – what sort of soap had she used to wash me with when I was a baby." The elderly Indian woman's question makes it evident that in the cultural contact encounters the women missionaries were identified by their white skin as possessing race and ethnicity as well as Indians. The identity of the missionary women as 'white' was as important to the Indian communities in which the women worked, as it was to the missionary women's concepts about their own identity as white middle-class New Zealand women.

It is evident that the missionary women's dress separated them and marked them as different within India. Because missionary dress did not conform to the Indian clothing conventions and ideals of femininity, the missionary women's social position was not immediately obvious to Indian women who attempted to read the missionary dress for significance and meaning. Hopestill Pillow describes how on one *zenana* visit in Brahmanbaria the Indian women mistook the missionary women for men or men dressed in women's clothing. Hopestill states that it took "some time and talking to convince them that we were women like themselves, and that we had only come to do them good".⁷⁶ Emma Beckingsale also explains how she was believed by Indian women to be a man dressed in women's clothing in order to gain access to the female areas of the house.⁷⁷ These incidences highlight the fear some Indians held of missionary deception where male missionaries were attempting to access Indian domestic spaces by dressing as women, and therefore risking the purity and status of the females in the house.

⁷⁵ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "Brahmanbaria and Barisal", February 15th 1896 (CBC)

⁷⁶ H. Pillow, "Letter from Miss Pillow – Visiting the Villages", *The New Zealand Baptist*, June 1893, p.90

⁷⁷ E. Beckingsale, "The First Trip of the New Boat", *The New Zealand Baptist*, January 1899, p11,

However, it also demonstrates the way in which dress could be mistaken, or 'misread' in a cultural contact situation. By not wearing the markers of marriage as indicted earlier in the chapter, New Zealand missionary women's dress disrupted Indian women's reading of dress for social and cultural meaning, especially in relation to marriage status. Dress could also prove a barrier to understanding if it did not conform to cultural conventions. For instance during *zenana* visits, the missionary women mistook questioning by Indian women relating to clothes and social position as rudeness or impertinence, whereas it is a typical aspect of Indian female social ritual. Emma Beckingsale experiences this and writes in her diary that during her visit to a particular house she "got a disagreeable little shock...one woman who had been gazing at me fixedly (I thought she had been listening) said 'Are you married?'"⁷⁸ In this context therefore the questions over whether or not Emma is married can be seen, rather than rudeness, as an attempt to understand the missionary system of dress as it did not contain the usual Indian markers of marriage that facilitated everyday social communication.

Because dress is reflective of wider social beliefs and practices it is a useful medium through which to examine cultural contact encounters for the expectations and ideals that each group brings to the cultural encounter experience. For the New Zealand women missionaries and the Indian communities in which they worked, dress presented a way for each group to define themselves as well as defining each other. The missionary women chose to continue to dress in British and New Zealand style clothes in India, despite numerous impracticalities and the unsuitability of this style of dress for India. The maintenance of British style dress was an important factor in the

⁷⁸ Emma Beckingsale Diaries, "First steps at Chadpur", 16th December 1897 (CBC)

missionary women's maintenance of their own identity as white New Zealand women and as upholders of the ideals of Christianity and British civilisation. The missionary women's reading of Indian dress was influenced by their ideas of reform and the exotic, which supported and justified their identity as rescuers of Indian women. The rhetoric of dirt and cleanliness was again evident in the missionaries' writings on dress, in which the cleanliness of the clothes was representative of the moral state of the wearer. Western ideas about femininity were also important to how missionary women constructed Indian dress. To the missionary women the veils and *burkhas* worn by some Indian women demonstrated the closed and restrictive life that Indian women led as a result of their religion. Western concepts of respectability were also offended with the perceived 'nakedness' of some Indian dress, which to the missionary women represented the backwardness of India. It was not just Indian dress that was read and constructed in the cultural encounter with the missionaries. Indians also attempted to read missionary dress according to their own cultural frameworks of femininity, purity and a sense of the exotic.

CONCLUSION

New Zealand missionary women's perceptions of India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were informed by complex, and sometimes paradoxical, influences. In order to understand the Indian environment in which they worked, the New Zealand missionary women drew on wider international imperialist and missionary discourses, which already attempted to describe and categorise India. However, the New Zealand missionary women were also impacted upon by their experiences and backgrounds in New Zealand that meant their perspectives on India lend a varied voice to the established historical literature on imperial missionary women.

In the late nineteenth century the entry of single women missionaries into the foreign missionary field challenged the accepted gender roles for women within the churches and especially within the foreign missionary field. This feminisation of mission was an international phenomenon, with single women from Britain, America and the British settler colonies undertaking missionary work in India from the late nineteenth century. From 1876 to 1920, thirty-four New Zealand women were part of this international trend, which saw the opening of the missionary field to single women missionaries.

For most of the nineteenth century contemporaries perceived the missionary field as a masculine sphere of activity. This androcentric nature of foreign missionary work was reflected in the use of military and martyrological rhetoric in the missionary literature of the time. While women did take an active role in missionary life as wives of missionaries,

they were not officially recognised as missionaries in their own right. Missionary societies in the nineteenth century expected that a missionary wife's role centred upon the domestic sphere, supporting and looking after her husband and providing an example of Christian family and domestic life for the 'heathen' communities.

While the New Zealand missionary women participated in the international feminisation of mission, they were also influenced by a context of liberal feminist reform in New Zealand. The evidence suggests that the New Zealand women, who undertook missionary work in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, were educated women, who had taken advantage of the new opportunities opened by women's entry into higher education in New Zealand. These New Zealand women had already committed themselves to vocations as teachers, nurses and deaconesses. Foreign missionary work allowed them to continue their vocation in a foreign country, which presented further opportunities for greater responsibility and reward as well as providing travel and adventure.

However, while these New Zealand missionary women created a radical new role for single women within the churches and missionary societies in New Zealand, they employed accepted gender ideologies to justify this challenge. Liberal feminist reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drew on the accepted role of women as protectors of the home. Liberal feminists argued that the qualities that suited women for this role, as protector of the home, also fitted women for the role of reformers and protectors of society in general, especially of social morality. In New Zealand this

liberal feminist reform was intrinsically linked with, and reinforced by, evangelical Christian ideas of the feminisation of Christ. An image of a self-sacrificing and nurturing Christ provided New Zealand women with a religious justification for attempting to reform society, which they perceived to be their duty. New Zealand missionary women were thus using ideas that celebrated women's difference from and perceived moral superiority to men in order to challenge gender boundaries in the foreign missionary field.

While the liberal feminist concept of 'global sisterhood' suggested a cohesive international identity centred on the experience of being female, the image of the degraded Indian woman refutes this concept. This thesis has highlighted how missionary women in order to define the 'other' and to justify their own emancipatory goals, utilised this concept of 'global sisterhood'. The concept of 'global sisterhood' expressed aspects of feminist, evangelical Christian and imperial ideologies, which promoted a sense of responsibility and duty amongst Western women to their less fortunate 'sisters' in India. The New Zealand missionary women were informed by, and perpetuated, the image of the degraded Indian woman, which was also current in wider imperial and feminist discourses. This image of the degraded Indian woman constructed Indian women as victims of the Hindu religion and of Indian patriarchy. Women in Britain, America and the settler colonies, including New Zealand, believed in their superior emancipatory status. Thus, their beliefs in the duties of sisterhood required them to 'rescue' Indian women, by converting them to Christianity and British civilisation. A belief in the emancipatory nature of British civilisation and Christianity meant that British/Christian

ideals of femininity and domesticity were promoted as the ideals that Indian women should aspire to. These beliefs influenced how Indian spaces, especially the *zenana*, were perceived and represented. Influenced by ideas of cleanliness and disease, the missionary women from social reform discourses perceived the Indian *zenana* as dirty, diseased, cramped and imprisoning, thus furthering the image of the Indian woman as a victim in need of rescuing.

New Zealand missionary women were in a position to observe Indian society and form opinions and statements about what they saw. New Zealand missionary women became the intermediaries between India and the curious New Zealand Protestant church public. It was through their writings and rhetoric that missionary supporters experienced India and constructed their own interpretations of the place and its people. In this role, missionary women became authorities on India and their version of events and descriptions of the country took on credibility as 'fact'. Their educational and medical work, long periods of residence, travel around the country and local language skills, meant that missionaries had more interaction with local communities than did other European groups in India and consequently had greater opportunity to make detailed observations of Indian life. What the New Zealand missionary women 'saw' however, was informed by a complex mix of influences from both their experiences in New Zealand and wider missionary, imperial and social reform discourses.

The New Zealand missionary women did not however simply reproduce these wider international discourses. Instead they combined elements from different discourses,

creating a dynamic and unique perspective of India. In their perceptions of Indian domestic and religious spaces, the New Zealand missionary women drew on reform based ideas of cleanliness and disease as well as the imperial feminist ideals of domesticity. To the New Zealand missionary women, Indian spaces were representative of the nature of Indian religion and culture in general and as such were constructed as dirty, diseased and backward. European space on the other hand, was represented as clean, ordered and civilised. New Zealand missionary women believed that Indian space needed to conform to these British ideals, and that this was to be achieved by conversion of Indians to Christianity. However, these perceptions of Indian space were sometimes influenced by the missionary women's ideas about class, with poor or lower caste Indian space much more likely than wealthy or upper caste Indian space to be described in reform terms as being in need of 'rescuing'.

New Zealand missionary women's depictions of the Indian landscape and rural space also reflected a mix of discursive influences. The rural landscape of India was presented in the New Zealand missionary women's writings as idyllic, picturesque and free from the corruption of the city. These frameworks for viewing the Indian rural landscape were drawn from Romantic ideas concerning the nature of beauty and reform ideas about the recuperative and restorative nature of the countryside. Perceptions of India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were gendered. While the dominant male discourse on Indian landscape and jungle was as harsh, unforgiving and wild, the New Zealand missionary women depicted the Indian rural landscape and especially the jungle as idyllic and picturesque. Influenced by Orientalist ideas concerning the exotic nature of

‘other’, New Zealand missionary women enhanced this romantic depiction of India by presenting India as a mythical country of luxury and wealth. Orientalist ideas of the feminine nature of India are also present in the New Zealand missionary women’s descriptions of India as an emotional and sexual “enchantress”.

Dress provides a medium for the communication of cultural values, and in the cultural encounter between missionary women and the Indian communities in which they worked, dress became a way in which to maintain one’s own cultural values as well as constructing those of the ‘other’. New Zealand missionary women’s dress combined the influences of reform paradigms of cleanliness with Orientalist ideas of the exotic. Because British ideas of femininity of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that the missionary women wore clothes that covered them from neck to ankles, Indian women’s dress was perceived as ‘naked’ and therefore unfeminine. In seeking to define Indian dress according to British perceptions of femininity, the New Zealand missionary women employed the paradigms of cleanliness, constructing Indian dress as dirty, emblematic of the moral status of its wearer, and consequently justifying the wearer’s rescue by the missionary women through conversion and education. Feminist reform ideas also influenced how New Zealand missionary women perceived and wrote about Indian women’s veils and *burkhas*, which were perceived as imprisoning and reflective of the imprisoned Indian women of the *zenanas*, reinforcing the image of the degraded Indian woman as a victim. The rhetoric of exoticism allowed New Zealand missionary women to nuance their reading of Indian dress. Indian dress was constructed as ‘other’, and special mention was often made of its bright colours and the use of

jewellery. Like the descriptions of Indian urban and domestic space, the dress of the wealthy or more Europeanised Indians were often presented as exotic rather than in terms of degradation. The missionary scheme in India was a process of cultural interaction, which involved a mutual encounter of New Zealand, and Indian women, in which each side constructed their version of the 'other'. While it is difficult to detect Indian constructions of the New Zealand women as 'other', it is evident that the New Zealand missionary women were a site of curiosity for Indian women.

New Zealand missionary women were thus part of an international trend towards the feminisation of the foreign mission field in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Missionary women had varied and complex reasons for undertaking mission work but these motivations influenced the way in which they understood and represented India in their writings. The paradigms of cleanliness, Christianity and civilisation that influenced the missionary women's perceptions of Indian public, religious and domestic space, also influenced the missionaries' ideas about Indian dress. In each of these contexts the rhetoric of cleanliness provided a language through which Hinduism became symbolised as essentially backward, restrictive and degrading. These human landscapes were in contrast to the idyllic image of the Indian countryside and jungle, which the missionary women constructed. The ideas of the unstructured jungle as beautiful were a reflection of Romantic ideas about the nature of landscapes and beauty. Exoticism, influenced by Orientalist discourse, also provided a framework for the way in which New Zealand missionary women perceived Indian landscape and Indian dress.

New Zealand missionary women used the concepts of Exoticism in order to make sense of the seemingly paradoxical nature of wealthy and upper Indian space and dress which did not seem to fit preconceived ideas about the backwards and dirty nature of Indian space and dress. This study of New Zealand missionary women in India offers a new perspective on women's religious history in New Zealand. It places New Zealand trends within an international context and examines the ways in which New Zealand colonial women were part of the complex cultural interactions of empire.

Appendix – New Zealand Missionary Women to India 1876-1920

| Name | Date | Years in India | Mission Society | Age |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|-----|
| Miss Thorn | 1876- ? | ? | ZBMM | ? |
| Miss Rosalie MacGeorge | 1886-1891 | 5 | NZBMS | 26 |
| Miss Annie Newcombe | 1887-1889 | 2 | NZBMS and APC | ? |
| Miss Hopestill Pillow | 1889-1895 | 6 | NZBMS | ? |
| Miss Annie Bacon | 1890-1899 | 9 | NZBMS | ? |
| Helen MacGregor | 1892-1909> | 17+ | WMS and UFCS and PCNZ* | ? |
| Amy Jane Harband | 1893-1916 | 13 | LMS | 35 |
| Miss L. B. Peters | 1894-1904 | 10 | NZBMS | ? |
| Alice Eleanor Henderson | 1895-1932 | 37 | WMS and UFCS and PCNZ | 35 |
| Miss Emma Beckingsale | 1895-1934 | 39 | NZBMS | 25 |
| Miss Lettie Ings | 1896-1900 | 4 | NZBMS | ? |
| Beatrice Mary Harband | 1896-1904 | 8 | LMS | 31 |
| Jessie Dougall Blair | 1898-1900 | 2 | UFCS | 21 |
| Joan MacGregor | 1899- ? | 45+ | MM and P&IVM | 26 |
| Miss Myra Inglesby | 1901-1906 | 5 | NZBMS | ? |
| Jessie Winifred Inglis | 1901-1935 | 34 | LMS | 28 |
| Edith M. H. Giesen | 1903- ? | ? | UFCS and PCNZ* | ? |
| Miss E. M. Gainsford | 1904-1913 | 9+ | NZBMS | ? |
| Miss Lilian Lang | 1905-1906 | 1 | ECS | ? |
| Sister Amy Evans | 1906-1939 | 33 | UFCS | ? |
| Sister Rose Mildred Davey | 1907- ? | ? | UFCS and PCNZ* | ? |
| Miss A. L. Cowles | 1911-1946 | 35 | NZBMS | ? |
| Miss N. Wilkinson | 1912-1921 | 9 | NZBMS | ? |
| Isobel Milne | 1913-1917 | 4 | PCNZ | 28 |
| Miss A. Hall | 1914-1917 | 3 | NZBMS | ? |
| Miss H. M. Rice | 1914-1937 | 21 | NZBMS | ? |
| Mary Salmond | 1916-1929 | 13 | PCNZ | 29 |
| Elise Brown | 1918 – 1923c. | 5 | ? | ? |
| Nurse Beale | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Sister Clare J. Cole | ? | ? | MM | ? |
| Elise Lilly | ? | ? | P&IVM | ? |
| E. Foord | ? | ? | P&IVM | ? |
| Miss Morton | ? | ? | P&IVM and LMS | ? |
| Miss Brown | ? | ? | P&IVM | ? |

Miss Christensen**

Miss Kean**

Miss McPhail**
Margaret Young **

26

* Paid partial support of missionary's salary

** Applied to missionary societies but did not get to work in India

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